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VEDANTIC WAYS TO

# SAMĀDHI

(दृग्दृश्य विवेकः - DR̥K-DR̥ŚYA VIVEKAḤ)



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COMMENTARY

BY

SWAMI ŚUDDHABODHĀNANDA SARASWATĪ

स्वामी शुद्धबोधानन्द सरस्वती



20-4

# VEDĀNTIC WAYS TO SAMĀDHI

(दृग्-दृश्य-विवेकः DR̥K-DR̥ŚYA-VIVEKAH)

THE ASCERTAINMENT OF THE TRUE "I"

*Sri Swami Sakrhatkritanandaji  
With Best Wishes*

*शुद्धबोधानन्द*

COMMENTARY

11-1-98

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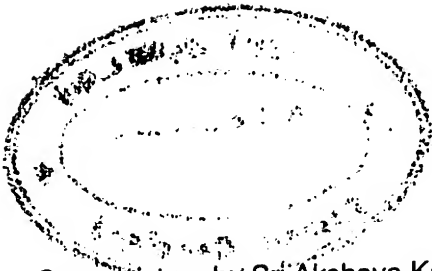
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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

We are glad that by publishing the book VEDĀNTIC WAYS TO SAMĀDHI (DṚK-DṚŚYA-VIVEKAḤ), we will reach a far greater number of seekers who have no direct access to Pūjya Swamiji's teaching. Despite being in the crowded hustling bustling atmosphere of a city, the seekers can withdraw themselves in their shell and pursue the study of the book as if they are listening to the teacher himself. This book is indispensable for all the spiritual seekers, initiates or advanced.

At present in the name of Vedānta under the garb of modernity, anything and everything else but Vedānta is dealt with. The unfortunate part of it is that the gullible audience is carried away by the oratory skill and accept it as true unfolding of Vedānta. This also shows the lack of their genuineness in the pursuit. The other objective branches of knowledge do have their importance, statuses and utilities in their respective fields. The communication ostentation therein may also fetch quick monetary gains to the speaker or the writer. But Vedānta is not a subject dealing with objective field and hence cannot be for playing to the gallery. Vedānta when presented in its pristine form is a great service to humanity.

The students of Pūjya Swami Śuddhabodhānanda Saraswatiji, have been fortunate to have exposure to Vedāntic teaching in its original sense. And this book - Vedāntic Ways To *Samādhi* (Dṛk-dṛśya-vivekaḥ) - is an evidence thereof. The book serves as a manual to refresh the in-depth knowledge of those who are listening

to Vedāntic teaching for a sufficiently long period, and practise contemplation (*nididhyāsana*). Like Pūjya Swamiji's teaching, his commentaries are marked by a style of mathematical precision coupled with the authenticity of the *Upaniṣads* and yet are characterised by simplicity. These commentaries are also free from irrelevant digressions and superfluous verbosity.

We are thankful to Oriental Institute (M. S. University of Baroda) for promptly furnishing us a xerox copy of the manuscript *Vākyasudhātīkā* by Ramachandrayatiḥ. We are grateful to the authorities of Śrī Akhaṇḍānanda Pustakālaya, Vṛndāvana, for lending us their copy of the book *Vākyasudhā* that carries the commentary of Swami Ātmānanda of Haradwār. Many of the students of Pūjya Swamiji have helped in different ways to publish this book in this finished form. We appreciate their services.

Mumbai  
November 23, 1996

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## PREFACE

To seek the best and the highest goal in a given field is quite natural for every human psyche. But hardly anybody really puts in efforts to achieve that goal by acquiring the eligibility to reach it. One rarely understands properly the goal aimed at. And to deploy suitable means for the same remains always wanting. To this phenomenon, the pursuit of attaining the acme of human existence called spirituality - in its true form, free from cults and fanaticism - is no exception. In fact such a state of inadequacy is far more prevalent in this field. For majority, such a goal is only in the realm of day-dream or at best it ends with groping in darkness.

*Samādhi* - totally absorbed state of mind in the true "I" (*ātmā*/Brahman) - is what almost all spiritual seekers aspire to attain. However, it becomes one more craze as any other pursuit of seeking sense enjoyment where one does not bother to find out the exact nature, role, pre-requisites of the sought and the means to achieve it. To avoid this pitfall and give proper direction to the seeker, this text, viz. *Dr̥k-dr̥śya-viveka*, develops the subject-matter of the highest goal of human life in a unique and concise way. It specifies the means to attain *samādhi* with self-knowledge (*aparokṣa-jñāna*) and its role as per guidelines of Vedānta. The text is incisive and analytical to unfold the truth.

There is a vast contrast between a person ignorant of oneself - the true "I" (*ātmā*) - having the bodily identification attaining *samādhi* by the technique of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* and the person having self-knowledge gaining it through the proper and adequate *nididhyāsana*

- contemplation of true "I". The contrast comprises the continuance of self-ignorance as against the absorption in self-knowledge. In the *samādhi* imbued with self-knowledge as described in this text, the seeker dwells all along on the knowledge of true "I" (*aparokṣa-jñāna*) during the stage of actual pursuit. Therefore to opine that aiming at such a *samādhi* postpones the liberation (*mokṣa*) is a misplaced fear. It is caused by the ignorance of the exact nature of self-knowledge (*aparokṣa-jñāna*), the contemplation (*nididhyāsana*) and the true "I" (*ātmā*) itself. The knowledge of a given thing is the cognition true to the nature of the thing. Any cognition not in conformity with the exact nature of the thing cannot be its knowledge. The same principle also holds good for self-knowledge (*aparokṣa-jñāna*). The exact nature of self-knowledge (*aparokṣa-jñāna*) is discussed at length in the Introduction. The commentary on this text also includes an exhaustive introduction to cover a vast range of relevant topics like why, what, how of Vedānta in general and those of this text itself. Hence these aspects are not mentioned here.

*Samādhi* imbued with self-knowledge (*aparokṣa-jñāna*) is indispensable for *jīvanmukti* - liberation even while living - whereas mere self-knowledge (*aparokṣa-jñāna*) without *samādhi* by itself can confer *videhamukti* - liberation after the death. For further details regarding the role of *samādhi*, the reader can refer to my commentary on Vedānta *Pañcadaśī*, chapter-1, *Tattvaviveka* - Discovering Your Innate Greatness (pages 147 and 164 to 167).

A commentary in English language which has no suitable vocabulary to express the thought content and technicalities of Vedānta that has evolved in Sanskrit language has definite limitations. To understand an advanced Sanskrit Vedāntic text of *Īrṅ-dṛśya-viveka* having technical nature, I seek the co-operation

of the readers in certain respects. This is to ensure that they derive the maximum benefit from this commentary.

Vedānta has its own terminologies, like in medical science or engineering. Many of the Sanskrit terms used in Vedānta have no direct equivalents in English. Their meaning has been elaborately explained in this commentary. But, this is not necessary for those who have already exposed themselves to Vedānta earlier, and therefore know the full significance of such words. The readers of this category are more at home if the original Sanskrit terms are just used in the commentary. In the case of such readers, employing the English counterparts of these words - at times quite lengthy - interrupts the lucidness of evolution of the full import contained in the sentences. If only Sanskrit Vedāntic parlance is used, even if fully the term being explained earlier, it becomes a major stumbling-block for a beginner without comprehension of Sanskrit. In order to grasp the meaning, the learner has to pay full attention to the sentence. But, if the reader is unable to do so because he is unfamiliar with the Sanskrit words whose meanings have not been imbibed by his mind, the thought content does not evolve through the sentence. The reader keeps on struggling with the words losing sight of the concept.

An index with references to Vedāntic terminologies is added to this book. But, providing a glossary by itself does not solve the problem in question. With such a provision, the reader has to punctuate his grasp of meaning gathered prior to interruption, turn to the glossary, search for the Sanskrit word, go back to the text and establish continuity in his mind. Only a few can survive such a discipline of mind needed to finish their study.

To balance the opposite requirement and not to deprive any one the opportunity of lucid following of this text in its vivid import, a via media is resorted to. At most of the places the original Sanskrit terms are used along with their English equivalents or explanations as parentheses marked off either by brackets or dashes. This is done even at the risk of repetition or lengthening the sentence. At places where this practice is not followed, the original word or its counterpart is used very often either in the immediate preceding textual portion or it is located in the close vicinity of that sentence itself. The reader is requested to get accustomed to this style. Besides this, the familiarization with the key to transliteration to facilitate the reading of diacritical marks is necessary. The keys and the pronunciation of Sanskrit letters are separately given after the abbreviations.

The book *Dṛk-dṛśya-viveka* is one of the very important texts of Vedānta. So far it is lacking in an extensive and complete commentary in English with all its thoroughness. This need has prompted me to undertake writing of this commentary. More than that, I consider this as an opportunity given to me to clear my own knowledge. To put it in the words of the great Vedāntic master Sureśvarācārya,

.... स्वबोधपरिशुद्ध्यर्थं ब्रह्मविन्निकषाश्रमसु ।

"(This work has been composed by me) for the purpose of purifying my knowledge by testing it on the touchstones of the knowers of Brahman" (Nai.Si. 1-6).

Many of my students have devotedly rendered their services in manifold ways to make publication of this book in this final form possible. I pray to *Īśvara* that they get liberation in this life itself.

I salute with reverential gratitude all my masters, of past and present, from whom I have learnt Vedānta directly through their teaching and indirectly through their books. I would like to make a special mention with immense gratitude of my *guru*, Pūjya Swami Dayānanda Saraswatī at whose feet I underwent my advanced studies of Vedānta. Besides imparting knowledge in depth, Sri Swamiji has, as it were, handed over to us the key to unravel still greater heights of Vedānta. Finally I conclude this book by offering it reverentially to the ONE from whom all knowledge ultimately originates and to whom it truly belongs.

त्वदीयं वस्तु गोविन्द तुभ्यमेव समर्पये । "Oh Lord ! I truly offer unto you, your own thing."

Mumbai  
November 23, 1996

Swami Śuddhabodhānanda Saraswatī

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Br.U.</i>	<i>Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad</i>
<i>B.G.</i>	<i>Bhagavadgītā</i>
<i>Br.S.</i>	<i>Brahma Sūtra</i>
<i>Ch.U.</i>	<i>Chāndogyopaniṣad</i>
<i>Kṭ.U.</i>	<i>Kāthopaniṣad</i>
<i>K.U.</i>	<i>Kenopaniṣad</i>
<i>Mu.U.</i>	<i>Muṇḍakopaniṣad</i>
<i>Nai.Si.</i>	<i>Naiṣkarmya Siddhi</i>
<i>P.</i>	<i>Pañcadaśī</i>
<i>Śv.U.</i>	<i>Śvetāśvataropaniṣad</i>
<i>S.R.U.</i>	<i>Sarasvatīrahasyopaniṣad</i>
<i>S.V.S.S.S.</i>	<i>Sarvasidhāntasārasaṅgrah</i>
<i>Tai.U.</i>	<i>Tattirīyopaniṣad</i>

# Key to Transliteration & Pronunciation of Sanskrit Letters.

अ a ( <u>but</u> )	ट ṭ ( <u>st</u> art)*	} tongue on upper palate
आ ā ( <u>ma</u> ster)	ठ ṭh ( <u>an</u> thill)*	
इ i ( <u>it</u> )	ड ḍ ( <u>da</u> rt)*	
ई ī ( <u>be</u> et)	ढ ḍh ( <u>god</u> head)*	
उ u ( <u>pu</u> t)	ण ñ ( <u>un</u> der)*	
ऊ ū ( <u>po</u> ol)		
ऋ ṛ ( <u>rh</u> ythm)*	त t ( <u>th</u> irst)	} tongue on teeth
ए e ( <u>pl</u> ay)	थ th ( <u>th</u> umb)	
ऐ ai ( <u>hi</u> gh)	द d ( <u>fa</u> ther)*	
ओ o ( <u>to</u> e )	ध dh ( <u>brea</u> the <u>he</u> re)*	
औ au ( <u>lo</u> ud)	न n ( <u>nu</u> mb)*	
ॠ ṁ - Anusvāra (nasalization of preceding vowel) written like the dot above अ in अंशः	प p ( <u>sp</u> in)	
ॡ ḥ - Visarga (aspiration of preceding vowel) written like the two dots after श in अंशः	फ ph ( <u>loo</u> phole)*	
क k ( <u>sk</u> ate)	ब b ( <u>bi</u> n)	
ख kh ( <u>block</u> head)*	भ bh ( <u>ab</u> hor)*	
ग g ( <u>ga</u> te)	म m ( <u>mu</u> ch)	
घ gh ( <u>log</u> hut)*	य y ( <u>yo</u> ung)	
ङ ṅ ( <u>si</u> ng)	र r ( <u>dr</u> ama)	
च c ( <u>ch</u> unk)	ल l ( <u>lu</u> ck)	
छ ch ( <u>catch</u> him)*	व v (in-between <u>w</u> ile and <u>v</u> ile)	
ज j ( <u>Jo</u> hn)	श ś ( <u>sh</u> oe)	
झ jh ( <u>hedg</u> ehog)*	ष ṣ ( <u>bush</u> el)	
ञ ñ ( <u>bun</u> ch)	स s ( <u>s</u> o)	
	ह h ( <u>h</u> um)	
	क्ष kṣa	
	ज्ञ jña	

\* There are no exact English equivalents for the letters listed with an asterisk.

# INTRODUCTION

## THE WHY OF THE QUEST FOR THE ULTIMATE TRUTH

Humans are utilitarian. The good old saying, "Even a dull person will not undertake a task without keeping in view its benefits," displays the human psychology. It is quite natural if we question the purpose when the most ancient scripture, the Vedas - to be more precise, its section called Vedānta containing the *Upaniṣads* - exhorts us all to discover the ultimate truth. One of the *Upaniṣads* itself answers rather in a tone of warning, "If you discover your true nature - identical with the ultimate truth - before your body dies, your life is fulfilled; if not, there is utter ruin in store for you!" (*K.U.* 2-5)

The answer has a direct bearing on our aspirations and the goals of life. Our goals of life are many and varied. Yet, there is a common universal goal underlying them all. Despite the differences in their individual goals, all would like to be free from death, live happily without any sorrow, and be free from ignorance. A perfect fulfilment of these urges is just not possible by commonly known means of actions to get or avoid something. Our true nature itself, in contrast to our mistaken notion about ourselves, is what we seek to be. It is free from birth, death and ignorance. It is also absolute happiness, free from sorrows. All our present problems and pursuits are born of our ignorance of our true "I". In fact in the case of majority of us, our inability to understand the real problem of life is the actual problem. To know our true nature - identical with the ultimate truth - is the remedy to our unending search of happiness,

and the freedom from sorrow, mortality and ignorance. This topic will become clearer as we proceed with the text.

## QUEST FOR THE ULTIMATE TRUTH IS UNIQUE

The search of the ultimate truth leads us to that field of knowledge which is the most intricate and complex in nature to explore. Human tendency is to take many things for granted. Even the neuroscientists are unable to explain how exactly knowledge or experience "happens", in spite of their spectacular zeroing in on the physical aspect of the thought by powerful technologies such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and positron-emission tomography (PET). One thing is certain: the scientists will never be able to explain it unless they change their method of approach by proper supplements wherever the science cannot probe any further. Some of them, no doubt are groping in the western philosophies to find a solution; but it is only Vedānta which can solve this riddle, nay, which has already done so with its mathematical approach as it were - to which this text stands as a testimony - into a field where there is even no access to words and the mind. But equally a precise approach - and not a haphazard meddling of a hasty critic - as guided by Vedānta is indispensable to discover the truth that it reveals.

The tenets which reveal the means and the ends related to this quest are wrongly interpreted more and more. It is true that the sophisticated fields in various branches of advanced science do have enormous uncertainties. You find every other day the old theories being toppled down by new ones, only to get themselves knocked down by the subsequent ones. But still they all have a definite tangible field to investigate with the help of equally concrete tools, whereas the nature of the inquiry into the totally abstract



ultimate truth is quite complicated and different. Inaccessibility by any objective means to the field of ultimate truth makes it still more difficult. The case becomes even worse when the authentic and proper guidance is not available to the seeker. As a result, the highest pursuit in life appears to be an unattainable utopia to the majority of people.

Such a plight of the people living in the other parts of the world where this kind of quest is not in an advanced and accomplished state, is quite understandable. But it is sad indeed that in India, the land where the knowledge of the ultimate truth forms the very backbone of its culture, the present situation of ignorance about the means is no good. So, it is all the more necessary that one should follow the tested path built on a firm foundation.

## VEDAS REVEAL THE ULTIMATE TRUTH

The Vedas reveal both the final goal - the ultimate truth - and the means of discovering it. In fact this truth is the basis of the entire Creation. It is identical with the true nature of one and all, referred to as "I" - *ātmā* - at the individual level. The same is called Brahman with reference to the Creation. The nature of the ultimate truth is pure awareness - *caitanya* - free from all the attributes that we can be aware of. Proving the rationality of the entire pursuit of discovering the truth and the necessity of the pursuit are also an integral part of this culmination of education. The section of the Vedas dealing with this topic is called *Upaniṣad* or Vedānta. All the subsequent treatises on this subject also get included in Vedānta.

Vedānta is neither a theory nor any set of dogmas. It unfolds the ultimate truth for you to discover, provided you are available

and your mind is suitably receptive. *Vedāntic* knowledge is in fact meant for the entire humanity. It is beyond cults and religions.

## WESTERN PHILOSOPHERS COMMEND *UPANIṢADS*

The western philosophers too have not missed the greatness of the *Upaniṣads*. Schopenhauer, the German philosopher, who was certainly not a man given to deal in extravagant praise of any philosophy but his own, observed:

"In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the *Upaniṣads*. It has been the solace of my life - it will be the solace of my death."

Max Muller remarked, "If these words of Schopenhauer's (*sic*) required any endorsement, I should willingly give it as the result of my own experience during a long life devoted to the study of many philosophies and many religions." The great German thinker Schelling thought, in his old age, that the *Upaniṣads* contained the maturest wisdom of mankind. According to Will Durant, India can teach the world the tolerance and gentleness of the mature mind, the quiet content of the non-acquisitive soul, the calm of the understanding spirit and a unifying, pacifying love for all living things. This observation can be true only when the people adhere to *dharma* - prescribed code of conduct for human beings - as enunciated in the Vedas with their acme in the *Upaniṣads*.

## QUEST FOR TRUTH ENTAILS PROPER EFFORTS

It may be emphasized at the outset that Vedānta expects that the seeker shall have a mature, disciplined, impartial and open mind to begin with. If the mind is full of inhibitions, prejudices,

biases and wrong conclusions reached earlier, then it cannot discover the truth revealed by Vedānta. It is to be taught by a competent teacher (*guru*) to an equally competent student (*śiṣya*), preferably in a conducive atmosphere of a *gurukula* - an institution wherein students live with the teacher and receive the instructions. For want of proper guidance, most of the times, the seekers get stuck up on the path to one or the other distractions, of wrong means and end. Such misguided pursuit takes one away from the very discovery of the ultimate truth which is the final goal.

## NATURE OF DISCOVERY OF ULTIMATE TRUTH

Unlike the philosophy or metaphysics in the west, in our Vedic culture called *Sanātana Dharma*, Vedānta is not a speculation or an information bank. It is also not any hypothetical interpretation of the unknown. Vedānta - *Upaniṣads* - investigates into the true nature of human as a universal being and not as the one specified by caste, creed, cult, religion and generation. It discovers the highest unifying truth, or pure awareness (*caitanya*), which forms the basis of me, the individual, the entire Creation, and its Creator. That discovery is the ultimate "knowledge" identical with the ultimate "experience". All the types of knowledge or experiences of objects, events and beings in the Creation get presented to us through thoughts related to them arising in our mind. But the mind itself is inert and so are the thoughts. We cannot know inert thoughts. It is only because these thoughts in the mind get coupled with the reflection of pure awareness that we get to know them. Any knowledge - cognition - is possible only in the form of such inert thoughts being illumined by the presence of pure awareness. The "knowledge" or the "experience" referred to herein has no screen of thought (*vṛtti*) corresponding to anything. It is totally different from all the other types of knowledge and experiences.

The ultimate truth, pure awareness (*caitanya*), is the self-luminous knowledge or cognitive principle itself. For that very reason, it is also *anubhava-svarūpa* - the one whose nature is experience itself without the necessity of any other instruments of cognition. *Caitanya* or pure awareness by its nature is always experience, whether in our state of self-ignorance or that of self-knowledge (i.e. the knowledge of true "I"/*ātmā*). In the state of self-ignorance, "I" (*ātmā*) is experienced by us mixed with all the superimposed features of "not I" (*anātmā*/not self) and hence they are mistaken to be the characteristics of "I" (*ātmā*). In contrast to this, in self-knowledge "I" (*ātmā*) in its true nature which is free from all the superimposed features is appreciated without any mixed up cognition of superimposed *anātmā*. Such an appreciation itself is the experience of true "I" (*ātmā*) as *ātmā* is always *anubhava-svarūpa* (i.e. the one whose nature is experience itself). The one whose nature is experience itself does not need any separate thought (*vṛtti*) to illumine it. A specific - peculiar - *vṛtti* as described in Vedānta is essential in the penultimate stage to dispel the self-ignorance.

A complex nature of the topic under consideration demands a further elucidation at this juncture, though this text itself is going to apply a definite method of investigation to reveal the ultimate truth. The difficulty in understanding the subject matter is further heightened by our ignorance of how any specific knowledge or experience related to a given thing takes place. Our apathy towards delving deep into such matters is also an added disadvantage.

Let us now embark upon our investigation. It is carried out here in the form of a dialogue between a teacher and a student. This is to simplify the subject.

## NATURE OF THOUGHTS, EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE

**Student - śiṣya (S)** - Sir, how does an experience take shape?

**Teacher - guru (T)** - The experiences during the waking state are of two types:

- i) The experiences wherein there is the active participation of the external sense organs and the organs of action.
- ii) The other experiences are purely mental without the direct involvement of both types of organs.

In the former case the interaction of the external organs with their respective objects depicts the corresponding thought patterns called *vṛttis* in the *antaḥkaraṇa* - a subtle inner instrument - functional in nature rather than a structural entity. It comprises the fourfold faculties, viz. *manas* (mind), *buddhi* (intellect), *cittaṇ* (memory), and *ahaṅkāra* (ego). *Ahaṅkāra* is the erroneous notion of placing "I"-ness in the body etc. which are not truly "I", i.e. *anātmā* - not self.

In the second case, the patterns of thoughts arising in the *antaḥkaraṇa* are not born of present activities of sense organs or organs of action. However, such thoughts do have a bearing on the past perceptions and actions.

In either case, the thoughts (*vṛttis*) present us the experiences.

S - Is an experience the same as the knowledge?

T - It depends on the type of the experience. The correct experience, i.e. experience true to the nature of a given thing (*yathārtha-anubhava*), is its knowledge (*pramā*) itself. The incorrect one - experience not true to the nature of a thing - (*ayathārtha-anubhava*) is erroneous knowledge (*bhrama*). Let us see an example to this effect. Suppose you saw a snake in the diffused light at dusk. But, when your accompanying friend flashed the torchlight in that direction, you discovered it to be a rope. Your seeing a snake in this instance is an error, whereas the cognition of rope is the knowledge of that rope. Yet, in both the cases the experience is invariably there. The only difference is in its being incorrect or correct.

We experience or perceive that which is reported to us in our *antaḥkāraṇa* (inner instrument having mind etc.) through the medium of the thoughts based on the objects perceived by the senses, and not directly objects themselves. Here is the basis of the errors. When the thoughts are not in accordance with their corresponding objects we get mistaken notions.

S - Is there a rule that knowledge of a specific object cannot be an experience, or a given experience can never be knowledge?

T - How can it be so? In the illustration cited above it will be ridiculous to say that the moment you saw the rope as it is - which is knowledge - your seeing the rope ceased to be an experience. On the contrary the experience of a given thing is an essential prerequisite in gaining its knowledge. In fact the correct experience itself is the knowledge of the thing experienced.

- S - If the knowledge is invariably the correct experience corresponding to the nature of the object, why in our scriptures, at times, both the words "knowledge" and "experience" are used simultaneously?
- T - People have a tendency to conclude some information short of the true nature of the thing under consideration, as its knowledge. The word "experience" (*anubhava*) is used to avoid such lapses. It is worth noting that the word "experience" used in such cases is in the sense of the correct one and not the incorrect one.
- S - Do the thoughts (*vṛttis*) give the experiences and the knowledge by themselves, or do they depend on any other factor?
- T - *Upaniṣads* are never tired of repeating that *caitanya* - pure awareness (or consciousness) principle - is the only cognitive or knowledge principle in the entire Creation. So experiences and therefore the knowledge without any exception, are just not possible without a cognitive or knowledge principle distinct from all the inert things. If it were not so, the inert things must be capable of knowing on their own. This is far from the fact. *Caitanya* (pure awareness) is all pervasive and self-luminous (*svayaṁjyotiḥ* - *Bṛ.U.* 4-3-9 and 14). This is not an assumption, but the truth that is and can be discovered. That itself is the ultimate truth which is never extinct (*Bṛ.U.* 4-3-23). The Creation is subject to birth and destruction; but not the unborn, ever-existent principle, *caitanya*, the basis of the Creation. *Caitanya*, pure awareness, *cit*, *citi*, *saṁvit*, *ātmā*, pure consciousness and Brahman are synonyms.

The most subtle aspects of the food assimilated by us constitute the thoughts (*Ch.U.* 6-5-1 and 6-6-2). Thoughts are inert like their cause, the food. Their make up - constitution - is so subtle that pure awareness (*caitanya*) gets reflected in them like the light from a mirror or water. It is on account of this reflected pure awareness (*caitanyaābhāsa* or *cidābhāsa*) that the inert thoughts are brought to the level of cognition producing experiences or knowledge. The cognition of all that is inert including the thoughts themselves depends on the reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) just as all non-luminous objects are seen by the eyes in the presence of light. The reflection of pure awareness can never be independent of its origin, the pure awareness (*caitanya/cit*). Any reflection is a near-replica of its source. An ignorant child mistakes the mirror and the water to be the source of light themselves, not knowing that they have borrowed reflection of the sunlight to make them luminous. In a similar vein, people who lack discrimination between the nature of thought and that of pure awareness (*caitanya*), erroneously conclude that thoughts themselves have built-in cognitive power and hence they are known on their own.

## THE WHY OF KNOWING THE ULTIMATE TRUTH

- S** - The ultimate truth - pure awareness (*caitanya*) - may be highly indispensable for our cognition. Yet, in what way are we concerned about gaining the knowledge of pure awareness? What difference does it make if we know pure awareness or not, when it functions without our volition or involvement?
- T** - Good, you have asked pertinent questions. The ultimate truth is the true nature of one and all. Its discovery is the highest accomplishment in life.



S - How?

T - Listen. Let us see what is the goal of any human life. Is it not that all of us without any exception whatsoever, want to be happy? In and through our varied pursuits all the time we seek happiness without any trace of sorrow, and also freedom from ignorance and death. A mature person finds that in spite of the acclaimed best accomplishments there is no perfect contentment. Such pursuits do not lead to the above goals. And yet, it is not possible to give up such pursuits either. Vedānta discloses the root cause of this basic problem. It points out the fundamental cause as our mistaken identity of ourselves with what we are not, due to the ignorance of our true nature. The ultimate truth viz. the pure awareness (*caitanya*), is the true "I" - our true self - and it is also the basis of the entire Creation. But we mistake our embodiments - the gross, the subtle and the causal bodies - as "I".

Our physical body is called the gross body (*sthūla śarīra*). It is prominent during our waking state.

The subtle body (*sūkṣma śarīra*) consists of the inner instrument (*antaḥkāraṇa*), five vital airs (*prāṇas*) corresponding to the physiological functions, and five each of the cognitive and active faculties known as sense organs (*jñānendriyas*) and organs of action or motor organs (*karmendriyas*). The subtle body manifests exclusively in the dream state.

The causal body (*kāraṇa śarīra*) is the same as the ignorance of our true nature. It is the cause of both gross and subtle bodies and the identification with them. The deep sleep state is the exclusive state of this body.

The true "I" (*ātmā*) is the ever-existence (*sat*) without birth or destruction. It is the ultimate knowledge (*cit*) principle not dependent on anything. It is the absolute happiness (*ānanda*) free from any infinitesimal shadow of sorrow. In short it is called *sat-cit-ānanda*. This is not any imagination of some fertile brain. It is the whole truth repeatedly asserted by the Vedas in the *Upaniṣads*. It is personally verified by many great past and present masters through their ultimate experience, identical with the ultimate knowledge. The Vedas and great masters have justified the ultimate truth with a sound reasoning. The scripture of Vedānta is totally dedicated to the pursuit of revealing this truth. This discovery is the highest fulfilment in life.

**S** - Why do we suffer the sorrows including those of the birth and the death if true "I" (*ātmā*) is *sat-cit-ānanda* ?

**T** - Without any exception our sufferings are invariably due to our mistaken identity as already mentioned. All the limitations, sorrows, birth and death experienced by us belong to our embodiments. These are erroneously superimposed on "I". The embodiments and their modifications are considered as the intrinsic features of pure awareness, the true "I". For example, the gross body when lit is considered to be characterised by light. Light is wrongly taken as the intrinsic feature of the body. Similarly, the *antaḥkaraṇa* - the inner instrument comprising thoughts carrying out different functions - always gets the reflection of pure awareness (*caitanya* or *cidābhāsa*) and so *antaḥkaraṇa* is considered sentient. Based on this, *antaḥkaraṇa* is concluded to be "I". This is the universal mistake. Everyone commits this error because of the following.

"I" is a sentient entity, is a matter of universal experience. The inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) operates through the reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) because of which it always appears sentient. Therefore the sentient inner instrument is wrongly considered to be the true "I", despite the fact that the true "I" is pure awareness (*caitanya*) and is totally free from the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) and its modifications. This mistake is extended further to the gross physical body. It is like mistakenly considering light as the characteristic feature of the gross body: Such a mistaken notion is called the identification of the true "I" - pure awareness (*ātmā*) - with all the embodiments at gross, subtle and causal levels, whereby "I" appears to be sorrowful in nature. To put it differently, our present plight as a *saṃsārī* - a limited miserable creature, basically prone to many undesirable things notwithstanding the best of our accomplishments in life - is the direct outcome of our mistaken identity born of self-ignorance, i.e. the ignorance of true "I", the pure awareness (*caitanya*).

This is not a hypothesis. Its veracity can be gauged here and now. During our waking state we are identified with our gross physical body and the subtle body. In contrast to this, during the dream state the identification is restricted to the subtle body as our physical body remains out of our cognition during dream state. Sorrows are experienced only in the waking and the dream states while we are identified with the gross and subtle bodies. During deep sleep state there is neither any identification with the bodies nor any experience of sorrows. This universal experience proves that the identification with our bodies (embodiment) called *dehābhimāna* or *dehatādātmya* only is the cause of our misery. All the limitations and sorrows felt

by us are only related to our embodiment and never to the true "I" - pure awareness (*ātmanā*).

## PRECISE NATURE OF "I"/THE ULTIMATE TRUTH

- S - Can we perceive the true "I" - pure awareness (*caitanya*) by seeing, hearing, tasting, touching and smelling? Or can we handle it by some action?
- T - No, it is not possible. It is not an object which can either be perceived by sense organs or acted upon by the organs of action (*Mu.U.* 1-1-6).
- S - Why is that so?
- T - The sense organs can perceive only sense objects as they have attributes (*viśeṣas*) like sound, touch, form, taste and smell. On the contrary pure awareness (*caitanya*) is not an object with attributes. It is free from all the attributes (*nirviśeṣa*). The organs of action can handle only objects having limits, whereas the limitless (*ananta*) pure awareness (*Kṛ. U.* 1-3-15) cannot be acted upon by limited organs of action. Therefore it cannot be known as an object "this" and words cannot describe it directly.
- S - Sir, then it may not exist at all.
- T - No. It is the only ever-existent (*sat*) principle which is knowledge principle too, because of which the presence or absence of anything can be known, but it itself cannot be experienced as an object of perception or action.

S - Perhaps, it may be noumenon - conceivable but not knowable - as presumed by some western thinkers.

T - Not at all. Everything that is conceived - imagined - and known is only through the medium of thoughts (*antaḥkaraṇa-vṛttis*). Pure awareness (*caitanya*) is the very principle which illumines - makes known - all the thoughts irrespective of their objects of reference, either imagined or concrete. Its knowledge or experience is certainly possible; but with a difference that it cannot be known as an object of cognition, because of its unique nature unlike the other inert things which can be known as objects of cognition and action.

S - This seems to be quite strange and yet interesting. May I know its precise nature?

T - The eyes see, the ears hear, the nose smells, the skin feels the touch, and the tongue tastes. The vital airs (*prāṇas*) function at the physiological level. As for the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*), the mind (*manas*) entertains consideration (*saṅkalpa*) or thinks; the intellect (*buddhi*) decides; the erroneous "I" notion (*ahankāra*) mistakes the embodiment as "I"; and the faculty of memory (*cittam*) recollects. All these instruments and faculties are inert by themselves. The principle which enlivens them all enabling them to do their respective functions is pure awareness (*caitanya*) which is our true nature (*ātmā*) - (K.U. 1-2). It is this cognitive principle, also called *sākṣī* (direct illuminator) which in fact illumines - makes us known - all that we cognise (K.U. 2-4).

A computer, humorously called the giant fool, can be used as an illustration in this regard in a limited sense in the modern

context. Our embodiment may be taken as a computer. The CPU (central processing unit) with the various aspects of memory can be compared to an extent with our inner instrument (*antahkaraṇa*). The input/output controllers attached to the CPU are the sense organs. All the input/output devices, such as the VDU (monitor), keyboard etc., are the organs of action. The power supply unit is like the vital airs (*prāṇas*). Programs are the impressions gathered from various prior perceptions. Electricity that prompts all these parts and the faculties in the computer to function is equivalent to pure awareness (*caitanya*/true "I") which activates our embodiment.

S - Sir, the topic has become more abstruse in spite of the example.

T - Well, let me explain to you further with the help of two other illustrations. You certainly know what electricity is. Now try to analyse how exactly you know it. Is it ever possible for anyone to know electricity as a concrete object?

S - No.

T - Then how do you know electricity?

S - Through its varied effects like light, heat, sound, form etc. when manifested through different electrical gadgets.

T - That is right. Similarly, any form of energy or an abstract thing can be known only through its effects and not directly. The devices like ammeters used to measure the quantum of electrical energy are also calibrated based on the magnetic

effect of electricity. Even the electric shock is also an effect of electricity on biological tissue.

Now take another example of light. Bare light by itself is not visible. Similarly no objects can ever be seen without the light reflected from them. All that we thus see is the reflected light. Light is formless. Through its reflection it appears to assume the forms of the illumined objects despite the fact that it is totally free from those forms. Trying to comprehend light as the electromagnetic waves in a particular frequency is also an attempt to know through its specific effect. In spite of all such limitations we do know light.

Similarly, it is certainly possible to gain, however difficult it may be, the knowledge of our true nature, pure awareness (*caitanya*).

- S - That means it is an intellectual understanding like knowing electricity or light. All that I have to do is to have the thoughts in this order, "Pure awareness (*caitanya*) is the one because of which all the functions of the sense organs and the organs of action take place including the cognition of all the thoughts. I cannot know it as an object; so I know its unknowability. I must have a thought (*vr̥tti*) that no other thought can objectify it. All that is required is to negate all the things superimposed on true 'I' by saying, 'I am the illuminator (*sākṣī*) of them all.' By saying so, I disown everything other than me."
- T - No. You are still far from gaining the actual knowledge of the ultimate truth. The peculiar thought (*vr̥tti*) that reveals the ultimate truth necessarily has to be true to its nature. The

thoughts corresponding to mere verbalisation of a few statements or words from the teaching or the scriptures, by themselves cannot form the knowledge of the ultimate truth.

S - How can that be, sir? Did you not say that pure awareness (*caitanya*) cannot be objectified even by the thoughts? Is that not the way by which either electricity or light is known?

T - Yes, both light and electricity are known in that manner. But they are inert and so need to be objectified by the thoughts (*vṛttis*). However, the ultimate truth, viz. pure awareness (*caitanya*), is not inert. The mode of gaining its knowledge slightly differs from that of inert things. The how of gaining any knowledge will help you to understand this better.

A thought based on external perception, assumes the form of a given object (*viśayākāra-vṛtti*). This is the first step to know it. This thought has in itself the reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*). The thought (*vṛtti*) aspect having the form of the object, removes its ignorance in the perceiver's mind. Technically, it is called *vṛttivyāpti* - permeation of the thought. The reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) aspect reveals to the perceiver the said object which gets demonstrated as, "This is such and such an object," or "I perceive the object." This phenomenon is *phalavyāpti* - obtaining the result - which brings the object to the level of our consciousness or confers the knowledge of the object. In the absence of this phenomenon, an inert object cannot be known. Mere thought being inert in nature has no capacity to illumine - make known - the object, like the inability of the non-luminous water to illumine anything. But the reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) does illumine the object like the reflected sunlight in the water. The fact that the



knowledge of a particular object is determined by the object (*vastutantra*) will be amply clear in the context of *vṛttivyāpti* - permeation of thought - wherein the relevant thought invariably corresponds to the form of the object; or else there will be erroneous notion instead of knowledge.

Let us now see what happens while gaining the knowledge of the ultimate truth. A specific - peculiar - thought (*vṛtti*), conforming to the true nature of pure awareness (*caitanya*), otherwise called *vṛttivyāpti* is certainly necessary to eliminate the ignorance. Thereafter, there is no need of a separate *phalavyāpti* because the ultimate truth is nothing but self-evident pure awareness (*caitanya*) principle. It does not need any other cognitive principle or thought to make it known like light not requiring any other light to illumine it. All that is necessary is the removal of ignorance of pure awareness (*caitanya*).

**S** - That means a thought assuming the form of the formless (*nirākāra*) and attributeless (*nirviśeṣa*) pure awareness (*caitanya*) is indispensable to gain the self-knowledge. In short, it is impossible to know the true "I" - pure awareness - the reason being that the thoughts can depict forms (*ākāra*) or attributes (*viśeṣa*), whereas pure awareness is formless (*nirākāra*) and attributeless (*nirviśeṣa*). So, no thought can have its form.

**T** - No. An understanding of the nature of the mind in relation to pure awareness (*caitanya*) will enable you to comprehend the distinction here. *Caitanya* (pure awareness) itself is pure (*nirmala*). It is unsullied (*svaccha*) by the entire Creation and its defects which are erroneously superimposed on it. It is the

most subtle and hence cannot be objectified at all. The mind or *antaḥkaraṇa* can gain purity, clarity (unsulliedness) and subtlety similar to pure awareness (*caitanya*). This enables the mind (or *antaḥkaraṇa*) to conform itself to the nature of pure awareness (*caitanya*), i.e. mind can zero in on *caitanya*, the true "I" (*ātmā*), whereby the true reflection of *caitanya* in the mind is possible. The seeker's mind which has sufficiently taken to the self-inquiry as guided by the *Upaniṣads* (i.e. the *Śruti pramāṇa* - the valid means of knowledge), when tuned to pure awareness (*caitanya*) as stated above, becomes *ātmākāra* (the one which has the form of *ātmā*) or *Brahmākāra* (the one which has the form of Brahman) or *akhaṇḍākāra* (the one which has the indivisible form). This is a specific thought (*vṛtti*) that eliminates the ignorance of our true nature "I" and dissipates itself into self-knowledge (*ātmajñāna* or *Brahmajñāna*). It is peculiar and unlike other thoughts based on objects, events and beings having attributes. A pure mind (*śuddha antaḥkaraṇa*) is of course indispensable to accomplish self-knowledge. Once the self-ignorance has gone, no other thought (*vṛtti*) is required thereafter to know the true "I", which is itself self-evident knowledge principle. Technically, *phalavyāpti* is not required. Self-knowledge cannot be gained in any other manner.

The cognition of pure awareness (*caitanya*) in the state of ignorance is always *saviśeṣa*, i.e. accompanied by all the attributes. They pertain to the names and forms constituting the not-self (*anātmā*). These are ignorantly superimposed on *ātmā*, the pure awareness (true "I"), whereas the true "I" (*ātmā*) is *nirviśeṣa* - totally free from all the superimposed attributes. As the knowledge of everything depends on the true nature of the thing itself to be known (i.e. knowledge being *vastutantra*),

self-knowledge or the cognition of true "I" cannot be short of its attribute-free (*nirviśeṣa*) nature. The knowledge of true "I" which is the knowledge of Brahman or the ultimate truth, calls for the proper self-inquiry to eliminate all that is superimposed on *ātmā* or Brahman due to self-ignorance. Unlike as in the case of the knowledge of any object, a separate effort to have a particular form of thought (*vṛtti*) with attribute (*saṁviśeṣa*) is not required. Ādi Śaṅkarācārya has often emphasised for gaining self-knowledge the importance of this essential means of termination of all that is superimposed on the true "I" - *ātmā* or Brahman (*B.G. Bhāṣya* 18-50; *Bṛ.U. Bhāṣya* 1-4-10). In the state of ignorance as well as of knowledge, true "I" (*ātmā*) is *anubhava-svarūpa* - the one whose nature itself is experience. But, in the former, the experience is accompanied by all the superimposed things mistaken to be the inherent features of "I", whereas in the latter, it is totally free from them.

- S - Sir, I do agree that all that is superimposed on the true "I" (*ātmā*) has to be negated to gain the self-knowledge. Yet, I am unable to understand the why of actual termination or elimination of all the superimposed things on *ātmā*. After all, they are false and do not belong to me (*ātmā*). What then is the need of their actual elimination? When I say, "I am the illuminator (*sākṣī*) of all that is superimposed," do I not disown everything other than the true "I"?
- T - No. Such a doubt arises because, before you have got the true knowledge (*yathārtha darśana*) of the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*), you are concluding that all the superimposed (*adhyasta*) things are false. Consider the example of the rope being mistaken for a snake, cited earlier. Before actually seeing the rope, your statement that it is not a snake is not the outcome of your

personal verification. At best it is a useful and reliable piece of information borrowed from your trustworthy friend who has actually seen the basis, the rope. Your fear of the mistaken snake will not go totally until you see the rope firsthand. Then the mistaken snake will not appear any more.

In the state of self-ignorance, the pure awareness (*caitanya*) is always experienced by us only with the attributes of all the superimposed not self (*anātmā*). They mistakenly are taken to be the very characteristic features of *ātmā* (pure awareness). Unless the pure awareness (*caitanya*) free from all the superimposed things, is available for cognition, the knowledge of our true nature is not possible. Such direct discovery is called *aparokṣa-jñāna* or *aparokṣa-anubhava* (self-knowledge). The scriptural statements - like the friend's statement that it is a rope and not a snake - certainly help as the means in our present pursuit of knowledge. However, simply repeating those statements is not the actual self-knowledge. Let me repeat that knowledge being determined by the thing, anything known short of its true nature cannot be knowledge of the thing. The actual termination of all the superimposed things on pure awareness (*caitanya/ātmā*) is thus an indispensable step in gaining the self-knowledge. The intensity of self-knowledge enables one to appreciate the falsity of superimposed (*adhyasta*) things even when cognised thereafter.

S - Now I have understood the necessity of actual termination of all the superimposed things, but I have my own reservations about its practicality. Sir, is it not that all the things superimposed on the true "I" are cognised only through the relevant thoughts (*vṛttis*) of superimposed things?

T - Yes, that is so.

S - Then how can we ever separate thoughts from the pure awareness (*caitanya*), because all the thoughts are invariably permeated by the latter. It is an impossible task. For instance, we can never separate an erroneous snake from its basis, the rope.

T - Please think carefully. What separation are you speaking of? Is it something to be effected with the scalpel and the forceps? Can you not see with sufficient light, the basis, the rope free from the snake mistakenly superimposed on it? There is no separation of the snake than such a sight of the rope. All that we need is the cognition of the true nature (*yathārtha darśana*) of the basis (*adhiṣṭāna*). Such a cognition is possible in the case of pure awareness (*caitanya*) too. Though thoughts can never exist independent of pure awareness (*caitanya*), they are born and gone. Pure awareness need not always be accompanied by thoughts. In sleep there are no thoughts, yet pure awareness (*caitanya*) verily persists. Therefore, pure awareness (*caitanya*) free from thoughts, and so, free from all the things and their attributes superimposed on it, can also be cognised in our waking state. To achieve this, there are means available.

S - The means I know is *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*. Does that mean that self-knowledge is not possible without gaining the *samādhi* - a state of mind totally free from thoughts - of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*? That *yoga* does eschew all the thoughts from the mind. However, as I learn, it is a very difficult technique and requires sustained practice over the years. In that event I am afraid if I shall ever be able to get self-knowledge.

T - Yes, *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* is a technique accepted by Vedānta. It is not the only one; besides its philosophy is based on the wrong premise that the world including all the thoughts is real, necessitating the termination of thoughts for all the time. There are other effective alternatives too.

S - What are they?

T - The most effective alternative means is the *cijjāda viveka* - discrimination (*viveka*) of pure awareness (*cit*) from the inert (*jada*). Another name for this method is *dṛk-dṛśya-viveka* - discrimination of seer (*dṛk*) from the seen (*dṛśya*). The other means like chanting of long Om (*dīrgha praṇava*) accompanied by some other disciplines (P. 4-62) and the devotion to *Īśvara* - the Creator - can also confer to a great extent the tuning of the mind required as described earlier.

S - May I know if any great masters have spoken about this method of *cijjāda viveka*?

T - Let me quote what Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, a doyen of Vedānta, has to say in this matter. After specifying the function of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga samādhi* in the context of self-knowledge, he explains in his commentary on *Bhagavadgītā* (6-29) the role of *cijjāda viveka* as follows:

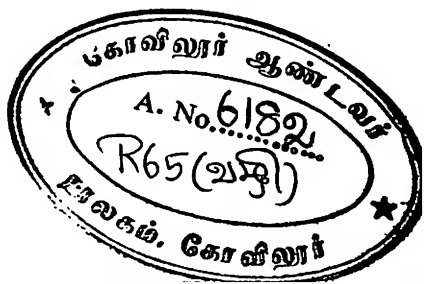
"The separation (*prthakkaraṇam*) of the inherent (*anusyūta*) pure awareness (*caitanya*) in all the cognitions by distinguishing (*vivekena*) its inert counterpart is also a means (*hetu*) for the direct knowledge (*sākṣātkāra*) of the self-luminous true 'I' (*sākṣī*) like the *samādhi*

(*cittavṛttinirodhaḥ*) of *aṣṭāṅga -yoga*. Exclusive *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* is not necessarily required. Therefore sage Vasiṣṭha had said -

'O Rama! *Yoga* and *Jñāna* - knowledge - are the two methods leading to the destruction of mind. *Yoga* is stopping of thoughts and *jñāna* is the thorough ascertainment of the truth.'

'For some, *yoga* is very difficult to accomplish, whereas for others the ascertainment of knowledge is so. Hence, the Supreme Lord has prescribed two methods.' (*Laghuyogavāsiṣṭha* 27-72 and 29-60).

"..... Among the two, the first method is practised by the followers of *Hiraṇyagarbha* belief - *yoga* school of thought - who opine that the Creation is real. The followers of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya who conduct inquiry as guided by the *Upaniṣads* (Vedānta) and who hold that the Creation is false, take only to the second means. They easily attain the extinction of the falsely projected (and so) sublated mind and the visible Creation projected by it when they gain the firmness (*dārdḥya*) in the knowledge of the basis, the pure awareness. For that very reason Ādi Śaṅkarācārya has not justified anywhere the necessity of *yoga* for *Brahmajñānīs* - the knowers of Brahman. Therefore the followers of *Upaniṣads* who possess a thoroughly ready mind having approached a competent teacher engage themselves in the inquiry as guided by Vedānta for gaining the knowledge of Brahman (which is identical with true 'I'/*ātmā*), and not in the practice of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*."



**S** - Is this method of discriminating the pure awareness from the inert aspects (*cijjada viveka*) in and through all the cognition, a new invention of later *Vedāntic* masters, or has it got the authenticity of the Vedas?

**T** - Of course, it has its basis in the Vedas. *Sarasvati-Rahasyopaniṣad* from *Kṛṣṇayajurveda* deals with it. In fact, our present text, viz. *Dṛk-dṛśya-viveka* is an exposition of the central teaching of that *Upaniṣad*. I have so far given you some idea of the basic principles of Vedānta.

Before beginning the study of this text let us know some details of secondary aspects of the book, such as its title, its author, etc.

The text *Dṛk-dṛśya-viveka* is also called *Vākyasudhā*. The component words of the title *Dṛk-dṛśya-viveka* mean as follows:

**Dṛk:** The one who sees, i.e. seer. *Draṣṭā* - seer - is synonym of *dṛk*.

**Dṛśya:** That which is seen or can be seen.

**Viveka:** Distinguishing or discriminating between two things, as distinct, sifting them apart; an investigation; judgement; discussion; true knowledge.

The title therefore means discriminating between or an inquiry into or the ascertainment of the true nature of seer and the seen. The word "seer" (*dṛk*) also stands for the hearer, feeler, taster, smeller, perceiver or in short the knower or the cogniser representing the very content of cognition, the cognitive principle because of which all cognitions are possible. The word "seen" (*dṛśya*) includes all the cognised things in the Creation that are inert without any exception. Thus finally the meaning of the title



Dṛk-dṛśya-viveka gets reduced to "An inquiry into or ascertainment of the cognitive principle or pure awareness (true 'I'/*ātmā*) and the inert (*jaḍa*) not self (*anātmā*) called the Creation."

Consider the other name. Its two words have the following meanings:

*Vākya*: Sentence; words; speech; aphorism.

*Sudhā*: Nectar; water; name of the holy river Ganges.

The word *vākya* in the present context can be taken as the *Upaniṣadic* aphorism (*mahāvākya*) viz. *tat tvam asi* - you are that Brahman - which reveals the identity of our (individual's) true nature with Brahman, the basis of the entire Creation. This text ascertains mainly our true nature at the individual level denoted by *tvam* (you) in the above aphorism. This knowledge is an essential prerequisite to know our identity with Brahman whereby our immortal nature is discovered. Figuratively the text contains the nectar in the form of such knowledge. Or, the said knowledge itself is equated with the holy Ganges. Traditionally the source of self-knowledge and the knowledge itself are called *jñāna-gaṅgā* - the Ganges or the fountainhead of knowledge. *Vākya-sudhā* can also be interpreted similarly. During the deliberation on the text proper we will understand that our sorrowful existence of limitation called *saṃsāra* is pinned down to the names and forms (*nāma* and *rūpa*) of the Creation. A bath in *Vākya-sudhā* (the Ganges of knowledge), i.e. discovering the truth contained therein, washes off the dirt of names and forms (*nāma-rūpa*), just as a dip in the holy river Ganges washes off the sins. The alternative title of the text, *Vākya-sudhā* also signifies our pristine nature.

The book does not stop after unfolding the ultimate truth, but it

proceeds to prescribe the practicable means of contemplation (*nididhyāsanam*) related to the truth so discovered. A successful practice of these means leads to *samādhi* wherein the mind gets totally absorbed without any divisions whatsoever into the true nature of oneself identical with Brahman, the basis of the entire Creation. In all there are six *Vedāntic* ways to *samādhi* described which form a unique feature of this text.

When we analyse the content of this book, we find that there are in all 46 verses. Verses 13 to 31 barring 14, 21 and 28 are *mantras* 52 to 67 quoted verbatim from *Sarasvatī-Rahasyopaniṣad* of *Kṛṣṇayajurveda*. The said *Upaniṣad* in its first 48 *mantras*, deals with *upāsanā* (meditation) of Goddess Sarasvatī - the presiding deity of all the types of knowledge. Thereafter till the end, i.e. *mantra* 68, it deals with Vedānta. The distinction between *dr̥k* (seer) and *dr̥śya* (seen) referred to in the *Upaniṣad's* *mantra* 53 is elaborated with the accompanied aspects, by the author of *Dṛk-dr̥śya-viveka* in the first 12 verses. The portion from verse 32 till the end constitutes to a great extent an exposition of the last *mantra* of the *Upaniṣad*. Thus this text serves as a commentary on *Sarasvatī-Rahasyopaniṣad*.

Such exposition is not plagiarism. On the contrary a number of *Vedāntic* treatises (*prakaraṇa-granthas*) which deal with a particular topic of Vedānta do literally incorporate in them the *mantras* from the *Upaniṣads* and elaborate upon them for a better understanding. The only purpose of the authors of such treatises in composing them is to help the seekers in their pursuit of the highest goal of life. The acquisition of name, fame, honour, distinction, power and position was not the intention, nor the exhibition of one's scholasticity the motive of these authors. The greatness of ancient Indian culture was in acknowledging *Īśvara* - the Creator - as the

very source of both knowledge and medicines - the basic necessities of life. Hence these two were not to be exploited for monetary gains. Plagiarism is an evil prompted by vested interests. Copyright has relevance only in the modern world because there is every possibility of ill-intention.

Śrī Bhāratīrtha, the co-author of the famous *Vedāntic* treatise *Pañcadaśī*, is the author of *Ḍṛk-ḍṛśya-viveka*. Some opine that Ādi Śaṅkarācārya is the author whereas still others consider it to be Śrī Vidyāranya Muni. It is highly unlikely that either Ādi Śaṅkarācārya or Śrī Vidyāranya has authored this text. Śrī Brahmānanda Bhāratī who has written a commentary on this text refers to Śrī Bhāratīrthaguru as the author while introducing the first verse. It is worth noting that Brahmānanda Bhāratī was the disciple of Śrī Bhāratīrtha. So, we expect him to know accurately the books authored by his *guru*. There is also an indirect statement in his commentary which indicates that Ādi Śaṅkarācārya cannot be its author. He refers to Ādi Śaṅkarācārya by the word '*ācārya*' in his commentary on verse 30 while quoting a couplet from another text *Vākyavṛtti* authored by Ādi Śaṅkarācārya. There is no proof to consider Śrī Vidyāranya Muni as the author.

Among the Sanskrit commentaries (*tīkā*) on *Ḍṛk-ḍṛśya-viveka*, that of Śrī Brahmānanda Bhāratī is the only one which is readily available and is exhaustive. The other three of them not published so far are:

- i) *Vākyasudhātīkā* by Rāmacandra Yatīḥ.
- ii) *Vākyasudhāvyākhyā* by Bhīmadās Bhūpalāḥ.
- iii) *Vākyasudhāvyākhyā* by Viśveśvaraḥ.

The manuscripts of the last two commentaries are with Tanjore Saraswatī Mahāl Library. There is also a mention of a commentary by Ānandagiri in the book published by Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore, but its availability is not known. Even the bibliographical survey of Advaita Vedānta literature published by the University of Madras, does not mention it.

There is also another commentary available titled “Ātmānanda Prabhākara” by Swami Ātmānanda Saraswati. It was published in the year 1978 during the birth centenary of its commentator, though the particulars of the publishers are not known. Surprisingly enough, this commentary is the same as that of Vākyasudhātīkā by Rāmacandra Yatiḥ except that it is supplemented by elaborate passages at some places.

Let us now begin the study of Dṛk-dṛśya-viveka in detail.

# VEDĀNTIC WAYS TO SAMĀDHI

## दृग्दृश्य विवेकः

(DR̥K-DR̥ŚYA-VIVEKAḤ)

### THE NATURE OF TRUE “I”

#### IMPARTIAL INQUIRY IS NECESSARY

It has become a fashion nowadays to brush aside as myth or nonsense whatever we do not understand or have no valid rational verifiable explanation for, from our present limited level of understanding. This attitude is commonly observed among the educated people in general and those who claim to have knowledge of science or psychology in particular. At times they add a note of mockery to drive home their point. They pose as if they have the final answer to everything. Unfortunately, even some scientists believe that what meets their eyes is only real and all the rest is simply a fiction. This is mainly because, unlike the investigators of truth in India from ancient times, they never had the training in epistemology to verify the validity of the means of knowledge (i.e. *pramāṇa*) employed before accepting the final reality of what is discovered. Sense perception is certainly useful. The daily living is just impossible without it. Yet, what is reported through the sense organs need not be always true if tested on the touchstone of reality. The fascination for the technological glamour has robbed many of the sense of discrimination. As a result they even do not

inquire into the things not available to the sense perception, leave alone any discovery of them. By such deceptive self-acknowledged high esteem of oneself we can neither learn anything nor unlearn something. So an inquiry with an open mind, having the necessary prerequisites is highly indispensable if we are to discover the ultimate truth to end our limited existence of sorrows and mortality.

## THE DISCOVERY OF THE ULTIMATE TRUTH IS SELF-KNOWLEDGE

All that Vedānta does is to provide us the means to gain self-knowledge i.e. the discovery that the true "I" is not our embodiment, though it is universally mistaken to be "I". Our sorrows and limitations are on account of our mistaken identity. The true "I" is absolute happiness, totally free from sorrows, mortality and ignorance. The happiness is absolute because it is limitless self-revealing principle. It is independent of any object, event or being. The direct cognition of true "I" as shown here is self-knowledge. That itself is the knowledge of the ultimate truth.

The above fact appears strange. It is totally contrary to the universally prevalent notions. But the truth cannot be denied just because the majority of people are ignorant of it. The acceptance or rejection of the fact cannot alter the truth. The wise discerning person probes into it with an impartial mind, and discovers the truth finally.

The discovery of the ultimate truth is synonymous with the highest accomplishment in life that one can ever aspire for, viz. knowing the true "I". An intense urge to discover it is indispensable. The food is for the hungry; water for the thirsty; and the medicine for the sick. So is Vedānta for the *mumukṣu* - the

one who is earnestly set to free oneself forever from the life of strife and struggle by discovering one's own limitless true nature. A dead person cannot be treated. A healthy does not need any treatment. Only the sick person who knows one's state of ill health and wants to get cured, can be benefited by the medicines. So is Vedānta for those who are cognizant of the human problem of limitations and are very keen on solving it. Academic study of Vedānta born out of some curiosity, cannot guarantee by itself its final result, though secondary results to an extent are possible like some peace of mind or insight into one's life. Thus an impartial inquiry backed up by an intense inner-urge to know the true "I" is imperative in gaining the success.

## WHERE TO BEGIN THE INQUIRY

Naturally, the question arises where are we to begin the inquiry? Any inquiry into the unknown has to proceed from the realm of known. Let us first put together what we know about "I", if we are to discover the true "I".

All of us know for certain, "I am," or "I exist." Never do I exist periodically. I always exist. In the waking state I am present in and through all the circumstances and I am aware of them all throughout. It is so even in the dream state. I continue to be present in deep sleep state also. If it was not so it would not be possible for me to recollect the sleep experience undergone by me. The memory of sleep experience surely proves that I was present and aware of it in that state. In spite of this universal experience if at all, anyone doubts one's own existence, the one who has doubts is the "I" we are talking about. And of course he certainly exists which enables him to doubt his presence.

The above observation also points out that I am a sentient (*sacetana*) entity. Never am I inert in nature. If one argues that oneself is inert, in spite of our open mindedness, we are forced to conclude that the person is dull. An inert thing can never assert one's inertness. In short, I am a sentient entity who exists at all times. A sentient entity should necessarily have an innate cognitive principle as its very characteristic feature. These facts lead us to establish a norm to ascertain our real nature - the true "I" - and to the field where it has to be applied. The norm established is, "I am always the cognitive (*dr̥k*) principle and I can never be the non-cognitive (inert/*jaḍa*) one". It has to be applied to our entire embodiment which is universally considered as "I".

The questions that need to be considered now are as follows: "Can the physical body be the cognitive principle 'I'?" "Is it possible that the sense organs which perceive the objects, form the cognitive true 'I'?" "Can the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) be the cognitive principle 'I'?" "Is there a cognitive principle called 'I' totally distinct from all of these considered as 'I' so far?"

## THE HOW OF THE INQUIRY

Our embodiments consist of both the inert (*jaḍa/dr̥śya*) and the cognitive (*dr̥k*) faculties. It is like the hot water that scalds or a 'hot' iron ball that burns. Both have incorporated temporarily the heat or the fire principle in them though it is not their intrinsic feature. Or, it is like water in a bucket wherein the sun is reflected. It appears luminous though basically water is non-luminous. A child may mistake the hot water or the iron ball to be the fire principle itself or the water itself as luminous. The child can come to know the iron ball or the water to be cold and the water as non-luminous in nature only when it discovers them to be free from fire or light respectively. It is worth emphasizing that fire can never be



cold. The fire itself cannot be an object of burning or heating by itself. The light can never be non-luminous. It is impossible for light to illuminate light itself, as it does all the objects which are in its presence. In the same manner the cognitive principle can never cognise itself as an object. In other words, the cognitive (*dṛk*) principle can never be non-cognitive i.e. inert (*jaḍa/dṛśya*) so as to become an object of knowing viz. *dṛśya* (the known) of the cognitive or knowledge (*dṛk*) principle. When an inert (*jaḍa/dṛśya*) thing appears to be cognitive (*dṛk*) in nature it is temporary and only till the cognitive (*dṛk*) aspect is manifest in it. It is like the cold iron or the water behaving as hot, and the non-luminous water as luminous. When such temporarily featuring cognitive faculties themselves are found to be the objects of knowledge, their non-cognitive (*dṛśya*) nature gets exposed. This fact establishes that they cannot be the true cognitive (*dṛk*) principle, the true "I". There has to be the continuance (*anvaya*) of the cognitive (*dṛk*) nature in the ever-existent cognitive principle. In contrast to this, some time or other, there is the discontinuance (*vyatireka*) of the cognitive (*dṛk*) faculty in a non-cognitive (*dṛśya/inert*) thing which temporarily appears to be cognitive (*dṛk*) in nature.

There are a few cognitive (*dṛk*) faculties at different levels in our embodiment by which we are aware of varied things. We have to investigate the level of each of these cognitive faculties whether any one of them is the true "I". The one among them that never loses its power of cognition and becomes non-cognitive (*dṛśya*) is only the true "I" (*ātmā*). The true "I" is always cognitive in nature. Such a mode of inquiry called *dṛk-dṛśya-viveka* enables us to discern or sift the true "I" (*ātmā*) being cognitive or knowledge (*dṛk*) principle from the rest inert (*jaḍa/dṛśya*) not-self (*anātmā*).

## ROLE OF THIS TEXT IN DISCOVERING THE ULTIMATE TRUTH

The text *Drk-dṛśya-viveka*, by employing the method of discrimination between the cognitive principle and the inert (*cijjaḍa-viveka*), ascertains the true "I" (*ātmā*). An exact determination of "I" is technically called *Tvaṃ-pada-śodhanam* - ascertainment of the word "you" from the *Vedāntic* aphorism (*mahāvākya*) *Tat tvam asi*, i.e. you are that Brahman. Only knowing our true "I" without relating it to the basis of the entire Creation - the ultimate truth called Brahman - is not complete knowledge. The above aphorism by revealing the identity between the true "I" and the ultimate truth completes the knowledge. The abundance in the knowledge of the ultimate truth which is our true nature, itself is *mokṣa* - the liberation. But to gain this knowledge of identity, the discovery of the exact nature of "I" is indispensable. This text endeavours mainly in that direction as mentioned in the Introduction. The auxiliary aspects are also discussed here to the extent required.

The background is now set to probe into the first verse. It tells in nutshell the nature of true "I". The same is further elaborated in the next four verses.

रूपं दृश्यं लोचनं दृक् तद्दृश्यं दृक्तु मानसम् ।  
दृश्या धीवृत्तयः साक्षी दृगेव न तु दृश्यते ॥१॥

*rūpaṃ dṛśyaṃ locanaṃ dṛk tad dṛśyaṃ dṛk tu mānasam  
dṛśyā dhīvṛttayaḥ sākṣī dṛgeva na tu dṛśyate - (1)*

रूपं - the form दृश्यं - (is) the seen/perceived लोचनं - the  
eye दृक् - (is) the seer/perceiver तत् - that (eye) दृश्यं - (is) the

perceived/known मानसं - the mind तु - but दृक् - (is) the perceiver/knower धीवृत्तयः - thoughts of inner instrument (antaḥkaraṇa) दृश्याः - (are) the perceived/known साक्षी - the self-luminous cognitive principle दृक् - (is) the knower एव - only तु - but न - (is) not दृश्यते - known. - (1)

1. The form is the seen; the eye is (its) seer. The eye is the known; but the mind is the knower. (All) the thoughts are known. The self-luminous cognitive principle is always the knower; but never becomes the known.

### EYE AS *DRK* (COGNITIVE PRINCIPLE/THE SEER)

Our eyes have the power of sight which is one type of cognitive faculty. All the forms and the colours perceptibly available to the eye become its *dṛśya* - the objects seen. The eye gets the status of seer (*dṛk*) with respect to the forms seen by it. This is a fact beyond doubt. But one may wonder how is it going to help us in our present investigation.

### DISTINCT FEATURES OF *DRK* (COGNITIVE PRINCIPLE) AND *DRŚYA* (COGNISED THINGS / THE KNOWN)

There is distinct difference in the nature of the seer (*dṛk*) eye and the seen (*dṛśya*) forms. The following generalisations can be made based on the behavioural patterns:

- i) The seer eye is independent of the seen forms, whereas the seen forms depend on the seer eye for their existence.
- ii) The seer eye is one cognitive faculty as against the many seen forms.
- iii) The seer eye is sentient, but the seen forms are inert.

- iv) The seer eye is more lasting in nature than its seen counterparts which come and go.
- v) The seen forms do not constitute the seer eye. The seer eye is free from all the seen forms and their attributes. The seer eye remains unaffected by the attributes of all the seen forms.
- vi) The eye has the status of being the seer only with respect to the seen forms. The seer eye is only power of sight in the absence of the seen forms.

The above features, some of which are elaborated in the next three verses, are applicable to all the cognitive (*dr̥k*) principles - the seer/knower - and their counterparts the cognised (*dr̥śya*) things - the seen/known. These observations in the differences in the behavioural patterns of *dr̥k* (knower) and *dr̥śya* (known) are highly useful in our attempt to ascertain the true "I". One can isolate and discard the not-self (*anātmā*) - temporary cognitive (*dr̥k*) faculties in our embodiment including the body as not the true "I".

### INERT FORMS CANNOT BE TRUE "I"

All the forms that we see are themselves inert. Even the seen form of a living being including that of ours actually belongs to the inert physical body and not to its sentiency aspect. This can be easily verified from the sight of a corpse which has a form although it is a dead mass. The inert form which includes physical body seen by the eyes cannot be the cognitive principle true "I".

### EYE BECOMES *DR̥ŚYA* (THE KNOWN) WITH MIND AS *DR̥K* (THE KNOWER)

When we say, "I see", only the sense organ eye is considered

as "I". Can the eye having the power of vision be "I"? The eye cannot see itself because the subject and the object cannot be identical. Only the reflection of the eyes is seen in the mirror and not the eyes. Nevertheless the mind does know the eye as a seen object (*dṛśya*): That is how we know the ocular conditions like blindness, dullness and sharpness of vision. So the status of the eye as the cognitive (*dṛk*) principle is only relative. Otherwise it cannot become a seen object (*dṛśya*) of the mind. The faculty of sight also depends on the mind. That is why we do not see the objects right in front of our eyes when our mind is totally engrossed in something else. The typical statement, "My mind was preoccupied elsewhere. So I did not see." (*Bṛ. U.* 1-5-3), confirms the fact that the cognitive faculty in the eye is not its inherent feature. But the true "I" is always a cognitive (*dṛk*) principle and it never becomes an inert object of cognition just as light cannot be the object of light itself. So we find the eye as a seen or known object (*dṛśya*), it cannot be the true "I". This disqualifies the eye to be the true "I" because it becomes *dṛśya* - the known. Its cognitive faculty is not its own. The mind is the knower (*dṛk*) with respect to the known (*dṛśya*) eye.

The word *tu* - but - occurs twice in this verse. The first *tu* in the first line is to show the status of the mind as the knower (*dṛk*) with reference to all the sense organs and the organs of action. The mind is not the knower (*dṛk*) only in relation to the eye. We can verify this from our direct knowledge that the mind objectifies all the senses.

MIND ALSO BECOMES *DṚŚYA* (COGNISED THING/THE KNOWN) - IT IS NOT TRUE "I"

We are now facing a question whether this cognitive (*dṛk*)

principle called the mind is the true "I". The word *mānasam* - the mind - here implies the entire inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) comprising the mind, intellect, erroneous "I" notion called ego, and the faculty of memory (*manas, buddhi, ahaṅkāra* and *cittam*). All the modifications of the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) called *dhīvṛttayaḥ* - the thoughts - are inert in nature. The following experiment cited in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (6-7-1 to 6) verifies the inertness of thoughts. One has to fast or totally abstain from food continuously for fifteen days. Water of course must be drunk in abundance to protect the physiological faculties. At the end of the fifteenth day the person is unable to think or remember except for some meagre thoughts. Thereafter the food has to be eaten in a proper measure. The thoughts get restored soon. This shows that thoughts are the modifications of inert food. And yet, if the inert thoughts (being the entire inert inner instrument/*antaḥkaraṇa*) are able to cognise, it can only be possible if a distinct cognitive principle is available in them. It is like the non-luminous water appearing luminous with reflected sun. This cognitive (*dṛk*) principle which illumines - makes known - all the thoughts as *dṛśya* (known/cognised) is itself the final cognitive (*dṛk*) principle.

FINAL *DRK* (COGNITIVE PRINCIPLE) - *SĀKṢĪ* - IT IS TRUE "I"

The final cognitive (*dṛk*) principle is called *sākṣī* - the self-existent and the self-luminous knowledge/cognitive principle. It is the same as pure awareness (*caitanya* or *ātmā*).

The word *sākṣī* can be resolved in Vedānta as follows:

स्वाध्यस्तं सर्वं साक्षादन्यानपेक्षया ईक्षते प्रकाशयति इति साक्षी ।

"*Sākṣī* is that which directly/independently reveals illumines/makes known - all that is (falsely) superimposed on it."

Unlike the sense organs and the mind, the *sākṣī* itself is the self-existent knowledge principle. It does not depend on anything else for its cognitive faculty. The difference will be clear when we consider our power of sight. The eye depends on the mind, without which it cannot see. The inert mind in turn has to depend on *sākṣī*, the only independent cognitive (*drk*) principle. Such dependence is indispensable for inert sense organs including the entire inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*). They all are non-cognitive (*dṛśya*) in nature. They are all known by cognitive principle of higher level - the eyes by mind and the mind by the *sākṣī*. *Sākṣī* - pure awareness - is totally free from all the inert non-cognitive (*dṛśya*) things.

Generally the word *sākṣī* is translated in English as "witness". This English word is inadequate in conveying the actual meaning of *sākṣī*. The translation does not display the actual nature of *sākṣī* inherent in the original word. At best the word "witness" can show only two aspects of *sākṣī* namely, being not a party to the happenings and being unaffected by what is illumined.

### ***SĀKṢĪ* IS ALWAYS *DRK* (COGNITIVE PRINCIPLE)**

The eye was a cognitive faculty - *drk* (the seer) - with respect to the seen forms. But its status of being *drk* was taken away from it when the eye was found to be the *dṛśya* - the known - of the mind. Though the mind was the knower (*drk*) in relation to the known (*dṛśya*) eye, the status of mind being *drk* (the knower) was not accepted when all the thoughts which include the mind also, are discovered to be the *dṛśya* (the known objects) of *sākṣī* - the pure

awareness principle or the final cognitive principle. A novice, not knowing the exact nature of final *dṛk* (cognitive principle) called *sākṣī* may still doubt if the *sākṣī* also becomes non-cognitive as the known (*dṛśya*) of some other cognitive principle. To remove this doubt the author of this text emphasises the exclusive cognitive (*dṛk*) nature of *sākṣī* by the word *eva* - only - in the phrase *sākṣī dṛk eva* - the *sākṣī* is only *dṛk*. The word "only" (*eva*) negates the possibility of *sākṣī* becoming the *dṛśya* (the known) at any time.

### *SĀKṢĪ* NEVER BECOMES *DṚŚYA* (COGNISED THING)

To consolidate the negation done indirectly by using the word "only" (*eva*), the author proceeds to directly negate the possibility of *sākṣī* becoming the *dṛśya* (the known) in so many words asserting in the last phrase of the verse, "But never becomes the known".

The second time use of the word *tu* - but - found in the last phrase distinguishes the independent and the permanent status as *dṛk* (cognitive principle) of *sākṣī* in contrast to the dependent and the temporary statuses of eye and the mind. The ever-*dṛk*, i.e. the cognitive (*dṛk*) principle which is always so, continues to exist in sleep even in the absence of thoughts. The absence of all thoughts in the sleep is verily cognised and it can be inferred from our memory of sleep experience in waking state. The absence of thoughts, as and when found, in the waking state also is cognised by us. Such cognition is possible only in the presence of the ever-existing cognitive principle - *sākṣī*.

To say that *sākṣī*, i.e. the self-existent and self-luminous (or self-evident) knowledge/cognitive principle, also called pure awareness or *caitanya*, becomes *dṛśya* (the known non-cognitive inert thing) is against the declarations of the Vedas. The Vedas



have never described *sākṣī* as becoming *dṛśya* (non-cognitive). On the contrary there are emphatic statements that it is self-evident/ self-luminous (*Br.U.* 4-3-9 and 14) and is never extinct (*Br.U.* 4-3-23).

We can deduce through reasoning also the permanency in cognitive status of *sākṣī*. If the final cognitive principle *sākṣī* is available as a *dṛśya* - the known - for some other cognitive principle it cannot be the ultimate cognitive principle. Another *dṛk* - cognitive principle (second order) - will be required to enable the earlier (first order) *sākṣī* to cognise. The later (second order) *dṛk* - cognitive principle - is akin to the earlier (first order) one called *sākṣī*. Like the earlier (first order) *sākṣī*, the later (second order) *dṛk* also will need another (third order) cognitive (*dṛk*) principle. This series will continue to infinity without any termination. It is a logical fallacy termed as the defect of regress ad infinitum (*anavasthā doṣaḥ*). Eventually, this can only end in stupor or no possibility of any cognition whatsoever. This is not valid because we do find cognition of things, a universal phenomenon in the Creation.

Taking into account what we know, we arrived at a norm that the true "I" is always the cognitive (*dṛk*) principle and it can never be a non-cognitive (*dṛśya*/inert) one. The eye and the mind - two of the cognitive faculties available in our embodiment - did not fulfil the criteria of "I" because they become at times non-cognitive (*dṛśya*). It was also ascertained that the pure awareness (*caitanya*) called *sākṣī* is the true "I" as it is the only self-existent, self-evident, ever-existing cognitive/knowledge (*dṛk*) principle. Our investigation cannot stop here. A few more aspects are yet to be discovered. We also need to make the present inquiry comprehensive. This is carried out by the next four verses. To begin with the second

verse clarifies the first quarter of the first verse by providing the reasons for why the form is the seen (*drśya*) and the eye is the seer (*dr̥k*).

नीलपीतस्थूलसूक्ष्मह्रस्वदीर्घादिभेदतः ।

नानाविधानि रूपाणि पश्येल्लोचनमेकधा ॥२॥

*nīla-pīta-sthūla-sūkṣma-hrasva-dīrghādi-bhedaṭaḥ*  
*nānāvidhāni rūpāṇi paśyellocanamekadhā - (2)*

रूपाणि - forms नीलपीतस्थूलसूक्ष्मह्रस्वदीर्घादिभेदतः - due to distinctions (*bhedaṭaḥ*) like blue (*nīla*), yellow (*pīta*), gross (*sthūla*), subtle (*sūkṣma*), short (*hrasva*), long (*dīrgha*) etc. (*ādi*) नानाविधानि - various types (भवन्ति - are) (किन्तु - but) लोचनम् - the eye (तान् - them) एकधा - in one way (i.e. without changing itself) पश्येत् - sees. - (2)

2. The forms are many due to the distinctions like blue, yellow, gross, subtle, short, long etc. But the eye sees them without any changes in itself.

WHY THE FORM IS THE SEEN (*DRŚYA*) AND THE EYE IS THE SEER (*DRK*)

We observe in the world that a given cognitive (*dr̥k*) faculty does not change even when the things cognised (*dr̥śya*) change. The change or diversity is the characteristic of the perceived objects, while remaining changeless is the feature of the cognitive faculty. The rationale of this is the fact that only a changeless principle can cognise any change. The changes do

need a changeless base. The cognitive faculty will not be able to cognise the various things if that itself keeps on undergoing a change influenced by the diverse and changing cognised objects.

The forms that we see differ from one another. They differ in colours, dimensions, texture, lustre and many other aspects. The forms have the status of being the *dṛśya* (the seen) or the cognised things, because they are many and varied. They cannot be the *dṛk* (the seer), the ultimate cognitive principle, for the same reason. The eye sees different forms without taking unto itself the features of the things seen. When it sees blue, yellow or any other colour, it does not become so. If gross or subtle things are seen, the eyes do not grow or diminish in dimensions. The long or the short things seen do not elongate or shorten the eye. You may see a tumbler, a book, a man, a woman, a car, a cow, a tree or many other things which differ from one another. The eye as single power of sight sees them all without itself changing. Therefore eye is considered as *dṛk* (the seer) - a single cognitive principle - with respect to the varied forms seen. There is no means of knowledge other than the eye to know the existence of forms. The forms cannot be *dṛk* (the seer) because they can never see the eye or anything else and so they are fit to be only the *dṛśya* - the seen - with respect to *dṛk* (the seer), the eye.

The eye remains the same while seeing the different forms, no doubt, but it does undergo changes in itself. These changes are cognised by the mind. Thus the eye becomes the *dṛśya* (the known) in relation to the mind as its *dṛk* (the knower). This fact, mentioned already in the second quarter of the first verse, is now

explained in detail after which the present inquiry is extended to the rest of the sense organs.

आन्ध्यमान्द्यपटुत्वेषु नेत्रधर्मेषु चैकधा ।

सङ्कल्पयेन्मनः श्रोत्रत्वगादौ योज्यतामिदम् ॥३॥

*āndhya-māndya-paṭutveṣu netradharmeṣu caikadhā  
saṅkalpayenmanaḥ śrotratvagādau yojyatāmidam - (3)*

आन्ध्यमान्द्यपटुत्वेषु - blindness, dullness and sharpness      नेत्रधर्मेषु  
- characteristics of the eye      मनः - mind      एकधा - in one way  
(i.e. without itself changing)      सङ्कल्पयेत् - cognises      इदं - this (inquiry)  
श्रोत्रत्वगादौ - to ear, sense of touch, etc.      च - also      योज्यतां - may be  
applied. - (3)

3. The mind without any changes in itself, cognises the characteristics of the eye such as blindness, dullness and sharpness. May this inquiry be also applied to ear, the sense of touch etc.

WHY THE EYE IS THE KNOWN (DRŚYA) AND THE MIND IS THE KNOWER (DRK) ?

The eye may be or may become totally blind having no power of sight at all. Or the sight may be obscured taking away the clarity of the things seen. The eye may also be very sharp endowed with a capacity to see the minutest details of even the distant objects. All such characteristics of the eye are cognised by the mind without taking unto itself those features. When the mind cognises, "My eyes are blind.", the mind does not become blind or lose the power of thinking. Or if the mind objectifies, "My eyes are

dull.", it does not become dull. Similarly when the mind finds, "My eyes are very sharp.", the mind is not sharp or wise only because the eye is sharp. Otherwise the vulture will be a very wise bird. As the mind cognises the changes occurring in the eye without any changes in itself the mind is the knower (*dṛk*) with respect to the known (*dṛśya*) eye.

## EXTENSION OF INQUIRY TO OTHER SENSE ORGANS

So far the inquiry of discriminating between the knower and the known, i.e. *dṛk-dṛśya-viveka*, was restricted only to the eye and the mind. We also use other sense organs, viz. ear, skin (the sense of touch), tongue and nose, for our perceptions. All of them including the mind or more precisely the inner instrument (*antahkaraṇa*) are the two levels where the cognitive faculties are present in our embodiment. So our investigation of ascertaining the true "I" by employing this method can be valid only when our findings hold good with respect to all the cognitive faculties available in our body. Keeping this in view, the author is asking us to extend the present inquiry suitably to the rest of the sense organs. Thus, we have been given an exercise for validating what has been determined till now and on our own to discover a deeper insight in it.

Let us see the relevant aspects of rest of the sense organs:

**Ear (the sense of hearing):**

Sound (*śabda*) is the heard (*dṛśya*). The ear (*śrotram*) is the hearer (*dṛk*). The ear in turn is the known (*dṛśya*) with the mind as its knower (*dṛk*). Sounds differ on account of their distinctions of pitch, tone, timbre, melodious or jarring etc. Yet,

the ear hears them all without changing its auditive power. The mind cognises the characteristics of ear like deafness, poor audibility and sharp audibility without any change in itself.

**Skin (the sense of touch):**

Touch (*sparśa*) is the felt (*dṛśya*). The skin (*tvak*) is the feeler (*dṛk*). The skin itself is the known (*dṛśya*) with the mind as its knower (*dṛk*). Touches differ due to the distinctions of texture like soft, hard, hot, cold etc. But the skin feels them without any change in its tactile faculty. The mind cognises the characteristics of skin like numbness, semi-numbness, and an acute perceptibility of touch without any change in itself.

**Tongue (the sense of taste):**

Taste (*rasa*) is the tasted (*dṛśya*). The tongue (*rasanā*) is the taster (*dṛk*). The tongue is the known (*dṛśya*) with the mind as its knower (*dṛk*). The tastes differ due to their distinctions like sweet, bitter, sour, saline etc. But the tongue tastes them without any change in its tasting faculty. The mind, without any change in itself, cognises the characteristics of tongue such as tastelessness, dull taste and sharp taste.

**Nose (the sense of smell):**

Smell (*gandha*) is the smelt (*dṛśya*). The nose (*ghrāṇa*) is the smeller (*dṛk*). The nose is the known (*dṛśya*) with the mind as its knower (*dṛk*). Smells do differ due to their distinctions like fragrant, foul, faint, strong etc. But the nose smells them without any change in its olfactory faculty. The mind too, without any change in itself, cognises the characteristics of nose like total loss of olfaction, dull olfaction or sharp olfaction.

The facts that thoughts (*dhīvr̥ttayaḥ*) are the known (*dṛśya*) and the *sākṣī* (pure awareness/*caitanya*) - the self-existent and self-luminous cognitive principle - is only the final *dr̥k* (the knower), hold good with respect to each of these four sense organs. The inert or non-cognitive *dṛśya* (the known) can never be the true "I" (*ātmā*). Our physical body is an object of the faculties of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling. The body is known (*dṛśya*) by each of the sense organs. The known body cannot be "I". The known (*dṛśya*) sense organs and the *antaḥkaraṇa* (inner instrument) comprising all thoughts, are not "I". Our organs of action and the physiological functions called *prāṇas*, are not "I" because they are also the known (*dṛśya*). In short the entire embodiment of ours is the known (*dṛśya*) and so it is not the true "I". Only *sākṣī* (pure awareness/*caitanya*) is the true "I" because that is the ever-existing only cognitive principle which corresponds to the norm of "I".

#### ELABORATION OF "SĀKṢĪ IS ALWAYS DR̥K"

Now the statement *sākṣī dr̥geva* (*sākṣī* is always *dr̥k*) from the second line of the first verse is further elaborated in the fourth verse.

कामः सङ्कल्पसन्देहौ श्रद्धाश्रद्धे धृतीतरे ।  
हीर्धीर्भीरित्येवमादीन्भासयत्येकधा चित्तिः ॥४॥

*kāmaḥ saṅkalpasandehau śraddhāśraddhe dhṛtītare*  
*hīrdhīrbhīrityevamādīn bhāsayatyekadhā citiḥ - (4)*

चित्तिः - pure awareness (*sākṣī/caitanya*) कामः - desire  
सङ्कल्पसन्देहौ - consideration and doubt श्रद्धाश्रद्धे - faith and

its absence धृतीतरे - fortitude and lack of it ह्रीः - shame  
धीः - determined knowledge भीः - fear इत्येवमादीन् - of such  
nature and the like एकधा - in one way (i.e. without changing  
itself) भासयति - illumines /makes known. - (4)

4. The pure awareness (*sākṣī*) without changing itself, illumines (i.e. makes known) the thoughts, "Desire, consideration and the doubt, faith and its absence, fortitude and the lack of it, shame, determined knowledge, fear", and the like.

Without any exception, all thoughts are the functional modifications of the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*). The thoughts being inert, are non-cognitive in nature. The objects immersed in pitch darkness cannot be seen or appear bright unless illumined by light. Similarly the inert thoughts cannot be cognised or be known on their own. They can function as a cognitive faculty or can be known only when they get illumined by the pure awareness called *citi*. Before probing how exactly the pure awareness (*citi/caitanya*) illumines - makes known - all the thoughts, it will be useful to know the main varieties of different thoughts.

## MAIN VARIETIES OF THOUGHTS

The verse narrates a long list of thoughts as follows:

*Kāmaḥ:*

In general a desire is called *kāma*. It is in the form of a thought. Here the word *kāma* includes all types of desires. They are born of the feeling of some deficiency by fulfilling which one hopes to be happy or better off. Desires are never ending. It is next to impossible to fulfil all of them. In fact the



seed of desires is ignorance of true nature of "I" (*ātmanā*) which is complete and self-sufficient. The true "I" lacks nothing, wants nothing. It is indestructible, self-existent limitless happiness free from ignorance. Only in the wake of self-knowledge the desires get extinct and do not germinate.

*Saṅkalpasandehau:*

The two words *saṅkalpa* and *sandeha* are clubbed together in this compound word. *Saṅkalpa* is a consideration or surveying with the mind of varied aspects in order to reach a conclusion. When confronted with an object, the reflection or thinking about as to what it is, is *saṅkalpa*. It is in the form of thoughts that spring before reaching the conclusion or decision. The word *saṅkalpa* also has many other meanings like volition, mental resolve etc.

*Sandeha* means doubt - an undecided state of mind or a feeling of uncertainty. It is also a disinclination to believe. Doubts are not desirable to anyone in any field of worthwhile accomplishments. Lord Kṛṣṇa declares, "*saṁśayātmā vinaśyati*" - a person full of doubts is ruined (*B.G. 4-40*).

*Śraddhāśraddhe:*

This compound word has two components, *śraddhā* and *aśraddhā*. *Śraddhā* is generally translated as faith. It is the conviction (*āstikyabuddhi*) that what is told in the scriptures like the Vedas and similar other authentic sources of knowledge including the teaching of a competent teacher (*guru*) is true. It may not be possible for us to verify instantly about the veracity of many things told in the Vedas. Until we ourselves verify the truth, *śraddhā* serves like a seed capital in a business. It is not

a blind following wherein one never cares to verify the truth of what has been accepted.

There are some things told in the scriptures which are not possible for us to validate with the limited means of knowledge at our disposal as humans. Even in such cases the antecedents of the persons who have declared these things should help us to develop the required conviction that they are true. Take for instance the great sage Vyāsa who had compiled all the Vedas. He was the person who had not uttered a single lie even out of humour or sport. It is not the trait of such a noble person to hoodwink the humanity by bluffs. Those masters have nothing to get from the world because of the fullness they have discovered by gaining self-knowledge. Their very sojourn on this earth and what they do are born out of only selfless love for humanity. We have no reason not to accept the veracity of the scriptures given and taught by such masters. The truth of certain branches of knowledge like astronomy told in the Vedas can be verified by us now with the aid of modern gadgets. This also can help us to justify our acceptance of the remaining areas covered in them. It is in our interest that we develop *śraddhā* in the scriptures like the Vedas and the *Upaniṣads*.

*Aśraddhā* is the absence of *śraddhā*. One who has no *śraddhā* (i.e. *aśraddhadhānaḥ*) also is ruined (*B.G.* 4-40).

*Dhṛtitarā*:

It means *dhṛti* (fortitude) and *itarā* - the other one, viz. the absence of *dhṛti* called *adṛti*. *Dhṛti* is that mental faculty or the thought by which the sinking - declining in strength - body, senses, mind and intellect are enthused and revived

individually or collectively. Absence of such faculty is *adhṛti*.

*Hṛiḥ*:

Shame, bashfulness or modesty are in general called *hṛiḥ*. Shame here mainly refers to the feeling of being ashamed to do the things prohibited by the scriptures.

*Dhīḥ*:

Generally the intellect is called *dhīḥ*. But here this word means the ascertained knowledge (*prajñā*).

*Bhīḥ*:

Fear is *bhīḥ*.

The above list of thoughts is mentioned in the following *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad mantra* (1-5-3) as nothing but the modifications of *antaḥkaraṇa* (the inner instrument):

कामः सङ्कल्पो विचिकित्सा श्रद्धाऽश्रद्धा धृतिरधृतिर्हीर्षाभीरित्येतत्सर्वं  
मन एव ।

"All these, viz. desire, consideration, doubt, faith, absence of faith, fortitude, lack of fortitude, shame, determined knowledge and fear are only the mind, i.e. the modifications of *antaḥkaraṇa* (inner instrument)" (*Bṛ.U.* 1-5-3).

The word *ādi* (etc.) in the phrase *ityevamādīn* - of such nature and the like - of this verse includes other thoughts such as anger (*krodha*), greed (*lobha*) and many other varieties of them as mentioned in the *Aitareyopaniṣad* (3-2).

They are as follows:

संज्ञानमाज्ञानं विज्ञानं प्रज्ञानं मेधा दृष्टिर्धृतिर्मतिर्मनीषा जूतिः स्मृतिः  
सङ्कल्पः क्रतुरसुः कामो वशः ।

The following description gives their brief meanings:

- Samjñānam*: The feeling by which one feels sentient all over the body.
- Ājñānam*: The thought that prompts commanding or that by which the person is aware of one's status as a master.
- Vijñānam*: The knowledge pertaining to sixtyfour branches of knowledge available in the Creation.
- Prajñānam*: Quick wits or the presence of mind.
- Medhā*: The retentive power especially with respect to the texts studied.
- Dr̥ṣṭiḥ*: The thoughts corresponding to the knowledge of sense objects gained through all sense organs.
- Dhṛtiḥ*: The meaning was already told.
- Matīḥ*: Deliberation regarding politics, logistics etc. wherein the help of others is taken for granted.
- Manīṣā*: Independence in deliberation which is attributed to certain faculty of specific thought.
- Jūtiḥ*: Sorrow due to sickness.
- Smṛtiḥ*: The memory in general.
- Saṅkalpaḥ*: The meaning was already told.
- Kratuḥ*: Decision of the nature, "I shall certainly do this".
- Asuḥ*: Thoughts related to the functions like breathing etc. which are necessary for our survival.
- Kāmaḥ*: The meaning was already told.
- Vaśaḥ*: Conjugal desire.

The above exhaustive list of thoughts shows us that everything in the Creation can finally be experienced or known by us only through the medium of thoughts in our *antaḥkaraṇa* (the inner instrument). No experience or knowledge of the Creation and its different aspects is ever possible unless thoughts depict them for us. The *antaḥkaraṇa* (the inner instrument) can be viewed like a canvas on which thoughts weave for us the pictorial patterns of all that we cognise. This fact will be highly useful to us later in the context of the highest contemplation called *nididhyāsana*.

### HOW DOES *CITI/SĀKṢĪ* ILLUMINE THOUGHTS?

The verse proceeds further to explain how exactly does the pure awareness (*citi*) illumine - makes known - to us all the thoughts. It illumines (*bhāsayati*) whatever is present in one way (*ekadhā*) - without undergoing changes in itself. The illumined thoughts which come and go in the presence of *sākṣī* are variegated and subject to changes. But the pure awareness (*citi*) does not assume itself all these changes. It is always changeless irrespective of presence or absence of thoughts. To put it differently whether in its presence the temporary thoughts are born or not, *citi* remains changeless. Change and destruction are the characteristics of limited things which are born. *Citi* (pure awareness) is limitless in nature as will be seen from what is told in the next verse.

### *SĀKṢĪ* AND *CITI* ARE SYNONYMS

The *sākṣī* as *drk* (cognitive principle) was mentioned as the illuminator of all the thoughts, in the first verse. In this verse the same status is given to *citi*. Those who do not know the

meaning of these two words *sākṣī* and *citi* may see a contradiction in these two statements. But there is none. Both of them mean pure awareness. They are synonymous. The words *sākṣī* and *citi* are used till the end of this text interchangeably. In fact all the words *sākṣī*, *citi*, *caitanya*, *jñānam*, *bodhaḥ*, *ātmā*, *pratyagātmā*, *kūṭasthaḥ*, pure awareness etc. are synonymous.

## PERCEPTION AS EXPLAINED BY NEUROSCIENCE

An analysis of perception according to neuroscience and what Vedānta has to tell about the thoughts and the cognition, can be mutually supplementary and so, beneficial. At the outset we acknowledge that both employ different approaches because of their different fields of work and the goals.

Vedānta deals with a thought as the unit required for a specific cognition. It does not probe into its anatomy, as it is not its field of investigation. Its main preoccupation as regards the thoughts is to improve them qualitatively and control them quantitatively. This makes the thoughts conducive to the higher pursuit of discovering the true nature of oneself being identical with the ultimate truth. Vedānta begins the pursuit by spelling out the required measures to prepare the mind through good thoughts, and thereafter a proper inquiry coupled with appropriate means, and one gets beyond the very thoughts to their very basis the pure awareness.

The neuroscientists analyse the anatomy of thoughts as related to the brain so that they can help those patients who have damage or disorder in their brains. Their discoveries also help psychiatrists to cure the psychic disorders.

The breakthrough made by neuroscientists regarding the physical aspect of the thought helps a student of Vedānta to have a better perspective of the thought. This is an added asset in one's higher pursuit. Their study of the victims of mental diseases or brain damage, if properly analysed, can serve as a stark demonstration of how false is the reality of the world around us, which is uncompromisingly emphasised by Vedānta as a fact. On the other hand Vedānta also can point out to the neuroscientists the missing link regarding perception. Such a gap if suitably bridged can lead to a leap from thought energy to the very source of all the energies called the ultimate truth.

We shall first consider how exactly according to the medical science, the sense stimuli from different sense organs reach the brain one by one. Thereafter the cognitive function in the brain discovered by the neuroscientists so far will be discussed.

**Eye:** In the act of seeing, light reflected off the object being seen, reaches the retina via the cornea, pupil, aqueous humour, lens and vitreous humour. Retina responds by generating electrical impulses and transmitting to the brain via optic nerve, optic chiasma, optic tract, lateral geniculate body and optic radiation, to finally reach the grey matter of the occipital lobe of the brain.

**Ear:** Sound waves first reach the eardrum (tympanic membrane) to set it vibrating. The vibrating eardrum transmits its energy to the three minibones in the middle ear - malleus, incus and stapes. The foot of the stapes impinges on the membrane of inner ear. The fluid in the inner ear is activated and sets into motion the hair cells.

The endings of the auditory nerve, resting on the hair cells pick up these impulses and transmit them as electrical messages, along the auditory nerve, trapezoid body, lateral lemniscus, medial geniculate body, auditory radiation and finally the auditory grey matter in the cortex of the temporal lobe.

**Skin:** A wide variety of sensory receptors in the skin pick up the sensations of touch, temperature, pain and pressure, and convey them, along the ascending nerve tracts, to the somatosensory cortex in the parietal lobe.

**Tongue:** The taste buds on the tongue transmit the impulses of taste via the cranial nerves to the somatosensory cortex in the parietal lobe.

**Nose:** The olfactory membrane at the roof of the nose contains the olfactory receptors. The chemical substance present in an odour is carried by the inhaled air. The chemical gets bound with the local chemical called the odorant binding protein. This chemical binding initiates the electric impulses in the nerve endings of the olfactory membrane. These impulses are conveyed by the fibres of the olfactory nerve to the rhinencephalon more commonly known as limbic system, a part of the old brain, which is also responsible for moods and emotions.

Cerebrum, the largest part of the brain is divided into two hemispheres each having four lobes. It has an outer layer of grey matter called the cerebral cortex and inner core of white matter that relays information to and from the cortex. The cortex handles the most sophisticated functions of the brain, from processing all



special sense perception, commanding voluntary motor activities, thinking and planning. The functional units of the brain are the nerve cells called neurons. They transmit information in the form of electric impulses. The neurons are separated from one another by tiny gaps called synapses. When an electric impulse moves through a neuron, the cell releases a neuro-transmitter at the synapses. All neuro-transmitters induce electric impulse in the connected neurons.

The impulses starting from the nerve endings in the sense organs are transmitted through a series of regulating relays to the corresponding parts of the cortex where millions of neurons are induced to fire off minute electric impulses simultaneously in a pattern. These patterns provide the perception of the sense objects reported by the corresponding sense organs. The impulses die away within milliseconds, but their passage reinforces a particular set of connections among the related set of neurons giving them the ability to re-create the image of the object perceived. The persistence of the neuronal firing patterns over a time transforms the perception into the memory of that object. The memory can be short term or permanent/long term, depending on the repetition of a specific perception. The memory is re-created by inducing the neurons to send up electric impulses in the original pattern which by now has become a familiar one. By using advanced technologies like MRI and PET scanners, neuroscientists can watch a thought taking place, see the red glow of fear erupting in the cerebral part of the limbic system which regulates the heartbeat and other visceral functions and processes the emotions. They can also detect the firing of neurons as a long-buried memory is revived. This is where the present scientific explanation of the thought process stops. We are expected to take it to be so until something further is discovered.

## LACUNAE IN THE DISCOVERIES OF NEUROSCIENCE

Even if we accept that with these discoveries and more to follow, the human beings may one day fully comprehend the human mind, a major lacuna persists. A very basic and prominent question remains untouched, leave alone its full answer and that is what is relevant here. It does not really make any difference whether Vedānta declares that thoughts make you cognise or neuroscientists demonstrate that neuron firing of the electric impulses gives us the perception. Vedānta speaks of thought as a unit made up of five great elements (*pañca mahābhūta*), viz. space, air, fire, water and earth, in their subtle form before a process of grossification called *pañcīkaraṇa*. It does not probe further into the constitution of thought except bringing it to our notice that it is physical matter. Neuroscientists show us that the thought is a pattern of specific type of electric impulses which is of course a form of energy. It does not matter whether the thought is energy or matter, but what really matters is energy as well as matter themselves are inert. For, we know well that energy in motion is matter. There cannot be any difference of opinion regarding the fact that an inert thing, be it matter or energy, cannot know or cognise on its own. While Vedānta, based on what we have seen earlier, has already furnished an answer as to how an inert thought cognises, a few scientists who have by now become aware of this problem, are groping in the dark for an answer.

## SPECULATIONS OF A FEW SCIENTISTS

That, as per Vedānta, the *sākṣī* or *citi* - the self-existent, self-luminous knowledge/ cognitive principle - enables the inert thoughts to cognise, has been pointed out so far. Some of its different aspects will be elaborated further in this text with due clarity.

Before doing that let us briefly scan a few of the speculative theories put forth by some of the scientists and consider their attitudes in general with reference to our cognitive ability:

- i) According to one view "consciousness" is a concept of our own self. We reconstruct it moment by moment on the basis of the image of our own body, our own autobiography and a sense of our intended future. Those who hold this theory are also emphatic that consciousness is not some kernel of awareness corresponding to the "self", housed deep inside the brain. The proof is that the brain researchers after looking for it for more than a century, have concluded since long that there is no conceivable place for such a self to be located in the physical brain. And therefore they argue that it simply does not exist.

To avoid ambiguity, let us first clarify the accepted meaning of the two words "consciousness" and "awareness" as used in the above theory or speculation. In the current context, both the words refer to that faculty by which we are conscious of, or aware of, all that we cognise. It is not the totality of a person's thoughts and feelings. Because, when "consciousness" is taken as a conceptual product of the totality, a question arises. If "consciousness" takes shape subsequently how exactly can any one conceive oneself, reconstruct something, know the image of one's own body, know one's own autobiography and have a sense of one's intended future beforehand? Without being conscious, no conception about oneself is possible and without that conception "consciousness" can never be available. However, if it is argued that the present "consciousness" is the product of preceding "consciousness" which enables the required conception etc., it leads to the next question, when did the first moment of "consciousness" start?

If the answer is that it started at the time of our birth, then even at that time also the "consciousness" necessarily has to be the product of prior concept about one's own self. In that case how and where and when did the "consciousness" prior to the birth originate? Pointing out the foetus or the first union of sperm and ovum is not going to solve the problem. There also the same question arises which cannot be answered. It is a *non sequitur*. The above conjecture amounts to say that "consciousness" must be already there for the "consciousness" to exist. This is a logical fallacy called self-dependence, i.e. *ātmāśraya doṣa*. Such a notion of "consciousness" cannot hold good. Our anatomical structure called the body is inert by itself. It can be verified by seeing a corpse. Sperm and ovum including the genes, DNA and other biological material are themselves inert matter. They cannot be conscious on their own.

Citing the brain researches, to conclude that there is no conceivable place in the brain for the awareness or the self to be there, is as highly amusing as the declaration, "There is nothing called space in a jar because we could not see there such a thing called space even after scanning it with a scanning electron microscope!" The misleading conclusion of science research is based on the assumption that the faculty of awareness is perceptible by the sense organs and also on the blind belief viz. "Only, what meets the eye, can exist".

Let us further consider four more speculative theories. The second and the third given below have their basis in biology and neurology. The fourth one is from a mathematician. The fifth speculation is floated by a computer scientist. It is interesting to note that one of the subscribers of the second

view candidly admits that he is groping his way through the jungle whereas the author of the fourth view wonders, "It may be that the scientists will eventually have to acknowledge the existence of something beyond their ken - something that might be described as the soul!" Though the following four views differ from one another, they have a common basic theory. So they can be answered together.

- ii) Consciousness is a by-product of the simultaneous, high frequency firing of neurons in different parts of the brain. It is the meshing of these frequencies that generates consciousness like the tones from individual instruments produce the sound of a symphony orchestra.
- iii) The second theory itself is presented with a subtle difference. The firing of neurons is considered to be not only simultaneous, but also co-ordinated. Based on the indirect measuring of electric currents in the brain by using a highly sensitive device called magnetoencephalograph, it is concluded that a number of cells must be jumping up and down while firing the electrical signals, and these oscillations are the basic building blocks of consciousness.
- iv) Consciousness arises from quantum mechanics, the same process that governs the behaviour of subatomic particles.
- v) The mind is like a parallel-processing computer and consciousness is the co-ordinated signal-processing of individual "agents" described as simple computer programs.

These four speculative theories differ in their details, but all of them have one common base, viz. a combination of a few inert

things in the form of either matter or energy or both, produces the cognitive principle, pure awareness. This theory is similar to an old Indian school of thought called *Cārvāka* who had no details on scientific basis. Despite this lacuna what both modern theory and *Cārvāka* refer to is the same. However, the proponents of such theory have been answered by Vedānta long back.

If a combination of a few inert things can produce cognitive principle or so called consciousness, it must be produced at all the places wherever there is any combination of inert things like a pen, car, house etc. also. Why should it be confined only to living organisms? For example, according to this theory, there cannot be a distinction of sentient and inert things at all. The subatomic particles are present everywhere. Therefore everything should be aglow with the consciousness. This is far from the truth. So this theory cannot be correct.

If it is argued further that the manifestation of cognitive principle is possible only with a specific type of combination of inert things as pointed out in the neuronics behaviour, and not with any type of combination, this is also not true. The following investigation proves why the supposition is wrong. As we find the presence of consciousness principle or cognitive principle even in the absence of specific neuronal firing or oscillations, the cognitive principle cannot be considered as the inherent feature of those neuronal patterns. In deep sleep there are no specific neuronal patterns manifest. Yet, there is the sleep experience which presupposes the presence of cognitive principle. Our memory of sleep does prove such an experience. Vedānta explains elsewhere (P. 11-66) why the sleep is not available as a present or the then cognition. Therefore the cognitive principle is not produced by neuronics

electric impulses. It is present even in the absence of those impulses.

Suppose a person is dead due to a cardiac arrest. His brain, ears and eyes are not damaged. Even the eyes of the corpse are wide open. Immediately after the death his relatives are wailing around him. These stimuli are within the purview of his open eyes and ears. Why there are no neuron firing even when the neurons have yet not decayed? If it is due to the failure of heart and subsequent cessation of all the bodily functions, we would like to know that principle in the absence of which all the functions including the cognition stop. That principle must necessarily be a sentient or cognitive one distinct from neuron firing which is one of the many functions that go on in this inert physical body after enlivening it.

A common sense observation also can refute the theory that the neuron patterns produce consciousness. As seen earlier, "I" is a sentient entity and a cognitive principle. This fact cannot be disputed. It is also true that a possessor is different from the possessed. When we say my brain, my thought, my neurons, my neuronal firing patterns, all of them are distinct from the sentient "I" to whom they belong. These possessed things are themselves inert. So the cognitive principle must be distinct from all of them, even though neuronal firing may provide a conducive field for cognition. It is like the example of cold and non-luminous water feeling hot and appearing luminous by reflection of sun in it. Though water has served as a receptacle for heat and the light, yet it will be wrong to say that the water produced them both. Similarly neurons and their electric impulses do not produce the cognitive principle.

The firing of neuronal electric impulses has a definite place in cognising a thing. But it is a matter of further research if the so-called thought is identical with such emissions, or the thought is still something different. "Nothing else is found so far", cannot be the answer. It is well known that the absence of evidence is not an evidence of absence. Irrespective of what is clinically considered as death, the *Vedāntic* explanation of death as the departure of the subtle body (comprising the faculties of sense perceptions and actions, vital airs and the inner instrument) from the gross physical body which is left behind can throw much light in the research regarding how the cognitive aspect in our embodiment is available. Vedānta if appreciated with a right attitude can provide the missing link of the non-physical or metaphysical aspect in the neuroscience.

It is indeed surprising that those who have applied their intelligence in many sophisticated fields, are either unable or not ready to understand a simple fact that an inert thing can really never become a cognitive principle and vice versa. The irrevocable truth is, "A given thing can never give up its true nature (*sva svabhāvāt na nivṛttiḥ*)". If it is given up, we can conclude that the so assumed true nature is truly not so. The sun can never be cold, nor can ice be ever hot. If temporarily it appears that a given thing has given up the true nature, it can only be due to adding of features foreign to itself like water appearing hot and luminous. Perhaps there is some sense in the statement that a single pointed mind preoccupied in something profound misses to appreciate the thing obvious to common sense. Sir Isaac Newton is a glaring example. He had asked a carpenter to make two holes in his door for his cats to enter the house when he wanted to spend late nights in his laboratory during the freezing wintry nights. The big hole was meant for the cat and the small one for the kitten!



## SOME WRONG ATTITUDES TOWARDS VEDĀNTA

The scientific orthodoxy may reject the *Vedāntic* discovery with mistrust from the pulpit of their own reason. But trusting the reason totally itself is not reasonable. The reasoning depends on the validity of sense perception, and that itself cannot be totally trusted in the quest of the ultimate truth. Basically Vedānta deals with the problems and the topic not open to the methods of science. Vedānta begins where science stops. To expect Vedānta to step into the shoes of science is a sign of ignorance of their basic nature.

In the west, as rightly put by Will Durant, each philosophy has grown from the ideas of the great thinkers out of their personal traits and adventures influenced by the economic, political and intellectual environment which prevailed. This is not the case with Vedānta. It does not use the reasoning to establish the truth but uses it only to explain rationally the truth already established by the Vedas. Vedānta knows the limitation of reasoning and employs it only where it is necessary for a better understanding. Its discoveries are based on the triple cardinal test of the Vedas, reasoning and the direct discoveries of great masters from time immemorial. The Vedas in fact reveal that knowledge which is not directly accessible to the human intellect because of the limitations of sense organs and the intellect itself. It is said:

प्रत्यक्षेणानुमित्या वा यस्तूपायो न बुध्यते ।  
एनं विदन्ति वेदेन तस्मात् वेदस्य वेदता ॥

"The means that is not known by direct sense perception or inference, is known through the Vedas. Therefore the Vedas have the status of being the body of the highest knowledge."

The knowledge contained in the Vedas is universal though their origin is in India. The different religions in the world may or may not acknowledge, but the fact is all of them have their basis directly or indirectly in the Vedas, as all the houses and the mansions are centred on mother earth.

Some people may call the truth unfolded by Vedānta as intuition. The word "intuition" is very vague. It has been variously defined. For example, it is "a rapid unconscious thought process" or it is "the faculty of knowing without the use of rational process".

There are others like Daniel Cappon, a Jungian psychologist who has tried to demystify intuition by revealing its logic and function through tests like IQ-2. Whatever intuition may be, Vedānta has definite methodology, which has stood the test from ancient times. It cannot be intuition.

There are some others who shrug their shoulders with an air of authority remarking, "Oh, Vedānta is abstract". The true nature of everything is not governed by our whims and fancies. We have options to know them or not. But, once we decide to know, they have to be known as they are. Our will cannot change the nature of anything. If our true nature - the ultimate truth - itself is not tangible, it has to be known as it is. There is no choice. Vedānta does show the infallible method of its discovery.

Well, now let us put an end to this digression and revert to the mainstream of our discussion.

## EXACT NATURE OF PURE AWARENESS (*CIT*)

For a given thing, the status of being the known (*dṛśya*) is only

with reference to an appropriate knower (*dṛk*). The sense organs and the mind, though they appear to have the knower faculties (*dṛk*) in the beginning of the discussion, were finally shown to be the known (*dṛśya*). As hinted earlier, a similar doubt, can crop up whether the pure awareness (*citi/sākṣī*) also may be proved finally to be another known (*dṛśya*). This possibility is ruled out for two reasons:

- i) If the cognitive principle, pure awareness (*citi*) is to become the known (*dṛśya*), it would require another cognitive principle as its knower (*dṛk*). This will finally lead to regress ad infinitum. This was elaborated in the context of the first verse.
- ii) If it is argued that let the pure awareness (*citi*) itself be its own illuminator (*dṛk*), even then there is a fallacy of subject becoming its own object, i.e. pure awareness (*citi*) will have to be illumined by itself. This cannot hold good. One cannot ride on one's own shoulders. Therefore pure awareness (*citi*) can only be independent self-luminous cognitive principle. It can never be the known (*dṛśya*). To drive home this point, the next verse explains the last phrase of first verse - *na tu dṛśyate* (but never becomes the known) - by showing the exact nature of pure awareness (*citi*) as totally distinct from all the known (*dṛśya*).

नोदेति नास्तमेत्येषा न वृद्धिं याति न क्षयम् ।

स्वयं विभात्यथान्यानि भासयेत्साधनं विना ॥५॥

*nodeti nāstametyeṣā na vṛddhiṃ yāti na kṣayam*  
*svayaṃ vibhātyathānyāni bhāsayet sādhanam vinā - (5)*

एषा (चित्तिः) - this pure awareness न उदेति - is not born  
न अस्तम् एति - is not destroyed वृद्धिं न याति - does not grow  
क्षयम् न (याति) - does not decline स्वयं - spontaneously (on one's  
own) विभाति - shines (as knowledge principle) अथ- and साधनं  
विना - without any means अन्यानि - other things भासयेत् -  
illuminates. - (5)

5. This pure awareness (*citi*) is neither born nor destroyed. It does not grow or decline. It is the spontaneous self-evident knowledge principle and illuminates (all) other things without any means.

The word "this" is a demonstrative pronoun which indicates a proximate thing or that which is immediate in the mind. Here, "this" is used for *citi* (pure awareness) which has been already indicated, understood to some extent, and is under active consideration. Besides these aspects, the author has purposely used the pronoun "this" to show that *citi* (pure awareness) is the most proximate, nay, it is verily the true "I", with respect to which even the so considered proximate physical body of ours becomes remote. The said idea is not a fiction of the author's mind, but it is the truth declared by the *Upaniṣads*, verified by great masters, and is available to each and every one of us to verify if we pursue the inquiry properly without any laxity of efforts. The *Upaniṣad* declares -

यत्साक्षादपरोक्षाद्ब्रह्म ।

"That which is immediate (without the intervention of anything) and the primary "I" is Brahman". (*Br. U.* 3-4-1)

Pure awareness (*citi*) itself as the basis of the entire Creation is called Brahman. The exact nature of this *citi* is described now.

Pure awareness (*citi*) is neither born nor destroyed. The *Upaniṣad* also has declared, “*Na jāyate mriyate - ātmā* is neither born nor dies,” (*Kṛ. U.* 1-2-18). That which does not exist before, but comes into existence later on is called born. Similarly that which exists earlier but not afterwards is said to be dead or destroyed. We can easily verify first all that is born and destroyed to contrast it with pure awareness (*citi*). Let us begin with our common concept of considering our embodiment as “I” called *ahankāra* or ego. It is in the form of a thought known by us. It is the first thought on waking up from the sleep and the last to cease when we go off to sleep. Our thoughts are born and then they vanish. The individual embodiments are born and then they die. The Creation around us has a beginning and an end. In short, all that is known (*dṛśya*) has birth and death.

Pure awareness has no growth or decay. Absence of these two modifications also means, the absence of two remaining changes (*vikāras*), viz. an existence after being born (*astitva*) and modification (*vipariṇāma*), because growth and decay are possible only after the birth of a thing that continues to exist until it perishes. The existence or “isness” negated here is to be carefully noted as that facet which belongs to a thing after its birth and is subject to change. This form of existence should not be mistaken with the fundamental existence principle - pure awareness. That principle is not available for any modification. Thus *citi*/pure awareness is shown to be free from all the six modifications (*ṣaḍvikārās*), viz. born (*jāyate*), is (*asti*), grows (*vardhate*), undergoes metamorphosis (*vipariṇamate*), declines (*apakṣīyate*), and gets destroyed (*vinaśyati*). Obviously *citi* / pure awareness exists for ever. These six modifications are features of only the inert things which fall in the category of the known (*dṛśya*) and depend on the ultimate *dṛk* - cognitive principle, pure

awareness (*citi*) for their cognition. It is possible to refer to the known *dr̥śya* as "this" (*idam*) i.e. object of our knowledge. In contrast "I" (*aham*) cannot be referred to as "this" meaning, it cannot become an object of our knowledge. The true "I" can only be pure awareness (*citi/sākṣī*) was already shown. Whatever is available as this (*idam/dr̥śya*) cannot be the true "I". Therefore whatever is prone to any one or more of these six changes (*vikāras*) is not the true "I", pure awareness (*citi*). This is an effective norm to ascertain our true nature.

This pure awareness (*citi*) shines spontaneously or on its own (*svayaṃ vibhāti*), as the knowledge principle. The relative cognitive principles like sense organs also shine, i.e. they reveal to us the sense objects. But to know the sense organs we need the mind and pure awareness. The mind or the thoughts also shine - make us cognise. Yet, they can be known only by pure awareness (*citi*). In contrast to these, the pure awareness is the knowledge principle which does not depend on anything. Its spontaneity shows its independence as a cognitive principle. In other words it is the only self-evident or self-luminous knowledge principle. It is known on its own without dependence on any instruments of cognition. That is why the cognition "I am" is self-evident. Even in the deep sleep when the sense organs and the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) are absent, the presence of the cognitive principle "I" is verily evident which is inferred in waking state as "I did not know anything in sleep". The sun is self-luminous. It does not need any other light principle to illumine it. So is pure awareness. It does not need any other knowledge principle for its cognition.

Pure awareness (*citi*) is not only self-evident, but it also illumines - makes known - others, by its very nature of being ceaseless knowledge principle. It does not need any other

cognitive principle to illumine others, just as the sun does not borrow light from some other luminaries to illumine the world. Thus the phrase "Without any means" (*sādhanaṃ vinā*), shows its independence while illumining - making known - all the other things other than itself which are falsely superimposed on it. The independence of pure awareness (*citi*) in illumining all the other things will be clearer when its contrast to the sense organs and the mind is understood. The sense organs reveal to us the sense objects but only with the help of mind and pure awareness. The mind or the thoughts do make us cognise, but with their dependence on pure awareness. All the other things get illumined - are cognised - in the presence of pure awareness like the sunlight. We know well that the world gets illumined in the presence of the sun, but the sun does not put any efforts to illumine the world, even though we do say that the sun illumines. Here the verb "illumine" is not used in the sense of action but in the sense of sun's nature. Similarly pure awareness illumines other things without any action on its part. The content of the second line of this verse, which speaks of self-evident and all-illuminating nature of pure awareness, is actually the summary of a famous *mantra* - a Vedic declaration - appearing in the three *Upaniṣads* as follows:

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।  
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥

"There (in Brahman) the sun does not shine, nor the moon or the stars; nor these flashes of lightning shine there. Depending on its shining everything else shines after it. All this shines diversely by its splendour" (*Kt.U.* 2-2-15, *Mu.U.* 2-2-10, *Śv.U.* 6-14).

The words "shining" and "splendour" in the above Vedic declaration refer to the knowledge principle which enables the

cognition. The luminaries like the sun, moon etc. cannot reveal Brahman (pure awareness) to you. On the contrary, everything that exists and is known, is only on account of Brahman.

Should anyone doubt the rationality of pure awareness (*citi*) being totally free from all the six types of changes (*vikāras*), as told in this fifth verse, the relevant reasoning is offered here. In our daily transactions the knowledge that we gain involves the division of knower, the erroneous "I" notion (*ahaṅkāra*) and the known things or what is called the subject and the object. Such a knowledge is called *savikalpakajñānam* - the knowledge involving divisions. While the changes in the known (*dṛśya*) or the object are known by the knower (the subject), the knower or the subject (the erroneous "I" notion / *ahaṅkāra*) itself undergoes changes which are also known. The knowledge of the changing known as well as knower is possible only if there is a changeless knowledge principle as the basis. Therefore the knowledge with divisions of knower and the known or the subject and the object necessarily presupposes a changeless knowledge principle (*nirvikalpakajñānam*). Thus the ultimate cognitive principle pure awareness (*citi*) must necessarily be free from all the changes; otherwise it is not possible to gain any knowledge.

The following two inferences can be drawn to clarify the reasoning further:

- i) The true "I" which is pure awareness (*citi*) has to be free from the six types of changes because it is the spontaneous self-evident knowledge principle, not needing any other cognitive faculties to know itself. Whatever that is not free from the six types of changes, cannot be spontaneous self-evident knowledge principle. All that can be known as "this"/*dṛśya*



(the known) - beginning from erroneous "I" notion (*ahaṅkāra*) to the gross objects in the Creation including ignorance - serves as an illustration in this respect. All these being prone to these changes, they are not self-evident knowledge principle.

- ii) Pure awareness (*citi*) as described earlier is free from the six types of changes because it illumines - makes known - the things other than itself independent of any other cognitive faculty. Whatever that is not free from the six types of changes, cannot independently illumine the things other than itself. The erroneous "I" notion, the mind and the sense organs serve as the illustration in this respect because they are endowed with the six changes and they cannot illumine others without the aid of other cognitive faculties.

The true nature of pure awareness (*citi*) is, as already shown, based on the *Upaniṣads*. It is not deduced from logic. The reasoning was furnished only to prove its rationality. It is also possible for us to discover this truth for ourselves right here with the help of a properly prepared mind.

Based on what has been told so far, we know by now that pure awareness (*citi*) - the ultimate *dṛk* - is the spontaneous self-evident knowledge principle. It is also free from all the six changes (*ṣaḍvikāras*). This essential nature of *citi* (pure awareness) proves it to be distinct from all the known (*dṛśya*) - available as "this" - because the known (*dṛśya*) in its nature is inert or non-cognitive and is endowed with the six modifications. This proves that pure awareness (*citi*) by its nature itself is always *dṛk* (the cognitive principle) and it can never become the known (*dṛśya*). This fact is also revealed by many *Upaniṣads*. The following are two sample statements.

"This Brahman is not seen, but it is the seer; not heard, but is the hearer; not thought of, but is the thinker; not known, but is the knower;" (*Bṛ.U.* 3-8-11).

"The illuminator (i.e. *citi*) of the thought (*vṛtti*) related to the sight cannot be seen; the illuminator of the thought related to the sound cannot be heard; the illuminator of the thought related to the consideration (*sañkalpa*) cannot be objectified; the illuminator of the thought in the intellect cannot be known;" (*Bṛ.U.* 3-4-2).

In the context of the first verse let us now apply to the ultimate *dṛk* and all *dṛśya* the features or the behavioural patterns observed in the case of the seer eye and the seen forms. This will further clear the distinct nature of *dṛk* and *dṛśya*. Consider the following aspects step by step:

- i) The ultimate *dṛk* - the self-evident cognitive principle (pure awareness) - is independent of all *dṛśyas* (the known) which comprises the entire Creation; whereas *dṛśya* the Creation depends totally on *dṛk* (pure awareness) for its existence and functions.
- ii) *Dṛk* (pure awareness) is only one as against the varied and innumerable types of *dṛśya* (the known).
- iii) *Dṛk*, the cognitive principle is sentient in nature, but the *dṛśya* the Creation is inert.
- iv) *Dṛk* (pure awareness) is everlasting in nature. In contrast to that, *dṛśya* the Creation is transient, being of the nature of birth and death. That is why Vedānta declares that *dṛk* (pure awareness) also called *ātmā* or Brahman is *satyam* - real - i.e.

that which exists for ever without any change, and *dr̥śya* the Creation is *mithyā* - false. Not knowing the exact import of the word *mithyā* (false), Vedānta is criticised generally for pointing out that the experienced Creation is false. An experience is not a criterion of reality by itself. We do experience the dreams, yet, all of us know they are false. Vedānta would have called the Creation as *tuccham* - totally non-existent - if it were not experienced at all. False(*mithyā*) in *Vedāntic* parlance means, "Experienced but not ever-lasting in nature".

- v) *Dr̥śya* the Creation does not constitute - be a part of - *dr̥k* (pure awareness). *Dr̥k* is free from *dr̥śya* the cognised Creation and its attributes. Obviously *dr̥k* (pure awareness) is unaffected by the attributes of *dr̥śya*, the entire Creation. This fact shows us the reason why the true "I" - *dr̥k* (pure awareness) - is totally free from all limitations, sorrows etc.; popularly known as *saṃsāra*.
- vi) The self-evident cognitive principle has the status of being *dr̥k* (the knower) only with respect to *dr̥śya* (the known). *Dr̥k* is simply the self-evident, self-existent cognitive principle in the absence of *dr̥śya*, the Creation.

Our investigation till now has ascertained the true "I" as pure awareness (*citi / sākṣī*). The same "I" itself is Brahman, the basis of the Creation, otherwise called the ultimate truth.

# THE SOURCE OF HUMAN PROBLEM

## WHO IS THE SUFFERER (*SAMSĀRĪ*) ?

Without any exception each one of us has to carry one's own cross individually. The cross is nothing but our sorrows, insatiable wants, unending aspirations, confusions, tensions, strife, diseases, discontentment, restlessness, hatred, envy, rivalry, limitations and a cascade of consequences that follow. Even for some rare fortunate one who says "All is well with me", the Damoclean sword of death tied by a single hair is hanging over his head. Death too does not end this plight. Irrespective of what the majority believes, the life of limited existence is bound to continue hereafter. Our acceptance or rejection of it cannot alter the fate. Such a sad state of existence is called *saṃsāra* - a course of being on a constant move or always to be in a flux of mundane existence. The one who is in such a *saṃsāra* is a *saṃsārī*.

Vedānta does not highlight *saṃsāra* merely to draw a pessimistic picture of life. On the contrary Vedānta awakens the responsive humans from passive submission to the plight of *saṃsāra*. It shows how to stop resorting to the patchy remedies and solve the problem once and forever. The unbearable *saṃsāra* is an outcome of our mistaken identity born of self-ignorance. Vedānta and only Vedānta can remedy this problem by revealing our true nature which never gets sullied by *saṃsāra*. This statement may sound to some people as an unfounded assertion of a religious fanatic. But, it is not so. This statement is only an emphatic way of stating a plain fact that a problem born of ignorance can be solved

only by knowledge. Vedānta is a non-religious body of knowledge. Proper religious practices only confer a required frame of mind to pursue *Vedāntic* inquiry. Before proceeding to the remedial aspects of Vedānta, a clear identity of a *saṃsārī* - the one who actually undergoes the suffering of limited existence called *saṃsāra* - needs to be established.

The unique status of the cognitive principle - pure awareness (the ultimate *dṛk*, *sākṣī*, *citi*) or true "I" - with reference to the inert *dṛśya* (the known) leads to the following pertinent doubts:

- i) The self-existent, self-evident cognitive principle (*citi*) is, as shown earlier, totally distinct from entire *dṛśya* (the known). The experiential *saṃsāra* is completely reported by the thoughts alien to cognitive principle (*citi*). So *citi* (pure awareness/true "I"), totally unattached (*asaṅga*) and unassailed by the known (*dṛśya*) thoughts, cannot have *saṃsāra* for itself. It is like the sun who is totally unconcerned with what happens in the world.
- ii) The inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) comprising thoughts is constituted of five types of inert subtle elements (*sūkṣma pañcamahābhūtas*). Not to give up one's true nature is the inherent characteristic feature of everything. Therefore the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) cannot have relative cognitive faculty, or else the stones and furniture will start having cognitive faculties! That means the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) and the gross body also cannot have *saṃsāra* for themselves either.

IF THE SUFFERER (*SAṂSĀRĪ*) IS NOT CLEARLY DEFINED,  
VEDĀNTA WILL BE WRONG

- iii) If pure awareness (*citi*) the true "I" as well as the inner

instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) cannot have *saṃsāra*, then there is no other locus to whom it may be attributed. With no locus for *saṃsāra* being present there is no *saṃsārī* available. A sickness needs to be cured provided a patient having it exists in reality. In the absence of a *saṃsārī*, there cannot be any *saṃsāra* to be remedied either. Thereby self-knowledge, considered to be the antidote to *saṃsāra*, and Vedānta, the source of such knowledge, also are redundant or meaningless. In short, Vedānta loses its validity as the means of self-knowledge. The avalanche of such problems continues further. The attributes (*viśeṣas*) belong only to the known (*dṛśya*) and not to the cognitive principle, the ultimate truth being totally free from all (*dṛśya*). A thing devoid of the known (*dṛśya*) is necessarily attributeless (*nirviśeṣa*). Attributes enable the language to indicate a thing or convey meaning through the norms of species (*jāti*), property (*guṇa*), action (*kriyā*) and relation (*saṃbandha*). No language can have any words to indicate attributeless pure awareness (*citi*) which has no *jāti*, *guṇa*, *kriyā* and *saṃbandha*. That means Vedānta cannot describe pure awareness (*citi*) by direct use of words in an assertive style. Negating the attributes also cannot be a method of describing an existing thing. For instance, a rose cannot be described by only negating say lotus, jasmine and all other flowers. In view of such limitations Vedānta will fail to maintain the status of being a *pramāṇa* - valid means of knowledge.

All these limitations - especially Vedānta not retaining its status as the valid means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) - lead to a final conclusion that pure awareness (*citi/sākṣī*) or the true "I" itself cannot be a self-luminous cognitive principle devoid of the known (*dṛśya*), but possibly it is a changing thing. Some persons

even cite our daily ever-changing experiences of waking, dream and deep sleep states to prove the changing nature of "I".

REFLECTED      PURE      AWARENESS      (CITICCHĀYĀ)  
PROVIDES THE ANSWER

All the flaws recounted in accepting cognitive principle as self-luminous devoid of the known (*dr̥śya*) so far based on doubts raised are dispelled by taking into account the reflection of pure awareness (*citicchāyā*) being present in the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) or in all the thoughts. The reflection aspect was considered to an extent in our earlier discussion. The author proceeds now to establish the *saṃsārī* by specifying the reflected pure awareness (*citicchāyā/cidābhāsa/caitanyābhāsa*). Verses six to twelve show us the role of reflected pure awareness. They also give the description of the entity bearing the *saṃsāric* cross.

चिच्छायावेशतो बुद्धौ भानं धीस्तु द्विधा स्थिता ।  
एकाहङ्कृतिरन्या स्यादन्तःकरणरूपिणी ॥६॥

*cicchāyāveśato buddhau bhānaṃ dhīstu dvidhā sthithā  
ekāhaṅkṛtiranya syādantaḥkaraṇarūpiṇī - (6)*

चिच्छायावेशतः - due to the infusion of reflected pure awareness  
बुद्धौ - in the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) भानं - cognitive faculty  
(स्यात् - occurs) धीः - the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) तु - indeed  
द्विधा - two-sided स्थिता - is एका - one (of them) अहङ्कृतिः - the doer  
"I" स्यात् - is अन्या - the other अन्तःकरणरूपिणी - of the nature of  
mind (स्यात् - is). - (6)

6. The cognitive faculty in the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) occurs due to the infusion of reflected pure awareness (*citi*) in it (i.e. in *antaḥkaraṇa*). The inner instrument indeed is two-sided: one is the doer "I" and the other is the mind.

## THE NATURE OF INNER INSTRUMENT (*ANTAḤKARAṆA*) AND ITS FUNCTIONAL DIVISIONS

The five subtle elements (*pañcamahābhūtas*) constitute the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*). It is called "inner" because of its interior or subtler status with respect to the external sense organs and the organs of actions. The inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) can modify itself in varied ways. Each of these modifications having a specific function is called a *vṛtti* - thought. All these *vṛttis* are classified into four main divisions called *ahaṅkāra* or *ahaṅkṛti*, *mana*, *buddhi* and *citta*. Their functions are as follows:

### i) *Ahaṅkāra* or *ahaṅkṛti* - ego:

The thought (*vṛtti*) having the notion of identification (*abhimāna*) with one's embodiment is *ahaṅkāra* - erroneous "I" notion or ego. It corresponds to the subject, the author of all actions and experiences (*kartā* and *bhoktā*), according to grammar. *Ahaṅkāra* is the entity that claims the ownership (*vṛttimān*) of the entire embodiment including the other three types of the thoughts (*vṛttis*) in the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*). While performing all the actions (*karmas*) and undergoing all the experiences (*bhogas*) by an individual, these thoughts (*vṛttis*) - excluding erroneous "I" notion (*ahaṅkāra*) - serve as the means or the tools (*karaṇa*) for the *ahaṅkāra*. As a result of executing actions and



undergoing experiences, *ahaṅkāra* (ego) gets the statuses as *kartā* (doer/agent of action) and *bhoktā* (experiencer) respectively.

ii) *Mana* - mind:

The thought (*vr̥tti*) of the nature of *saṅkalpa* - consideration, reflection - and *vikalpa* - doubt, uncertainty, hesitation, indecision, projecting many facets - constitutes *mana* (mind).

iii) *Buddhi* - intellect :

The thought (*vr̥tti*) endowed with the decision making faculty (*nīścayātmikā*) is *buddhi*.

iv) *Cittam* - memory:

The thought (*vr̥tti*) comprising the faculty of recollection is *cittam* - memory.

All these four types of *vr̥ttis* are basically one and the same entity called *antaḥkaraṇa*. Their division into four types has been done only to emphasize the specific functions of each. It is like referring to the same person as a reader, singer, eater or player etc. depending on different functions being carried out. At times any one of these four divisions of *antaḥkaraṇa* is mentioned to suggest the entire *antaḥkaraṇa* (inner instrument). On the other hand sometimes the word *antaḥkaraṇa* itself is used to specify only one of its four facets. The four divisions are reduced to only two of them when the remaining two are suitably incorporated in the specified ones. The present verse has followed all these styles.

The words "*buddhiḥ*" and "*dhīḥ*" mentioned in the first line of the verse refers to the entire inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*). The inert inner instrument appears to have cognitive faculty of its own but actually it is due to the infusion or presence of *citicchāyā* - reflected pure awareness - in it. The word *bhānaṃ* means the cognitive faculty that enables the thoughts to produce specific types of knowledge. Thus, it is the reflected pure awareness (*cicchāyā* चिच्छया) in the inert thoughts or the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) which actually imparts the cognitive faculty to them.

The inner instrument- (*antaḥkaraṇa*) engages itself in various functions in the presence of pure awareness (*sākṣī*). It is like a piece of iron moving in many ways in a magnetic field. The author classifies these functions into *ahaṅkāra* - doer "I" or the erroneous "I" notion (ego) - and *mana* - the mind - called as *antaḥkaraṇarūpiṇī dhīḥ* here in the second line of the verse. These two divisions or the facets of *antaḥkaraṇa* do include the remaining two aspects, viz. *buddhi* and *cittam*. *Ahaṅkāra* (ego) also has decisive faculty of *buddhi* - the intellect. So the intellect (*buddhi*) is clubbed with *ahaṅkāra*. *Cittam* (memory) is included in the mind (*mana*) because both have *saṅkalpa* (faculty of consideration) in common.

The text *Vedāntasāra* of Sadānanda can be cited as another instance where grouping the functions of *antaḥkaraṇa* is done. In that book, only *buddhi* and *mana* are specified instead of all the four functions. *Ahaṅkāra* is included in *mana* - mind - in view of *saṅkalpa* (consideration) being common to both. *Cittam* - memory - is accounted in *buddhi* - intellect - considering that the faculty of distinguishing an object is common to them. In spite of the similarity of their basic nature,

*ahaṅkāra* and *cittam* are considered, at places, separately from the other two because the different objects related in their functions give them the distinct statuses. For example, the intellect (*buddhi*) deals with a new object whereas the memory (*cittam*) treats a previously experienced one. The mind (*mana*) deals with all the objects present internally and externally depending on the situation. But the ego has only one object and that is the "I" identified with the embodiment, the not-self (*anātmā*). So such groups of different combinations of two functions in each are also quite tenable. Depending on the context and the requirement, these different functional divisions of the one and the same inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) are resorted to.

*Ahaṅkāra* influenced by the reflected pure awareness conducts itself as the doer (*kartā*), experiencer (*bhoktā*) and the owner (*vṛttimān*) of entire embodiment. As per this division in the sixth verse, all the other *vṛttiḥ* (thoughts) which serve as the instruments of *ahaṅkāra* are included in the second aspect of *antaḥkaraṇa*, the mind (*mana*). These thoughts (*vṛttis*) are of nature of "I" (*ahaṃ*) and "this" (*idam*). The "I" thought (*ahaṃ vṛtti*) is not to be mistaken for *ahaṅkāra* - the erroneous "I" thought. The *ahaṅkāra* (mistaken "I") is centred on the embodiment wrongly concluded to be "I", whereas *ahaṃ vṛtti* ("I" thought) as in the case, "I am Brahman" (*ahaṃ Brahma asmi*), refers to the true "I" (*ahaṃ*) free from entire embodiment. *Ahaṃ vṛtti* ("I" thought) in *Vedāntic* parlance is called *ātmākāra* or *akhaṇḍākāra* or *Brahmākāra vṛtti* and it belongs only to the mind. The thoughts of the nature of this (*idam*) are all those enumerated in the context of verse four and those pertaining to memory. The two-sided division of one and the same inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) comprising

*ahaṅkāra* and *mana* as presented in this verse is to finally describe, rather exactly, the *saṃsārī*.

## HOW DOES THE INERT PHYSICAL BODY BECOME SENTIENT?

The inert inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) as pointed out earlier, acquires the cognitive faculty due to the reflected pure awareness (*citicchāyā*) in it. How the inert gross body appears as sentient (*sacetana*) is explained next.

छायाहङ्कारयोरैक्यं तप्तायःपिण्डवन्मतम् ।  
तदहङ्कारतादात्म्याद्देहश्चेतनतामगात् ॥७॥

*chāyāhaṅkārayoraikyam taptāyaḥpiṇḍavanmatam*  
*tadahaṅkāratādātmyād-dehaścetanatāmagāt - (7)*

छायाहङ्कारयोः - of reflected pure awareness and the ego (*ahaṅkāra*) ऐक्यं - union or identity तप्तायःपिण्डवत् - like a red-hot iron ball मतम् - is considered तदहङ्कारतादात्म्यात् - due to union with that ego (*ahaṅkāra*) देहः - the physical body चेतनताम् - sentiency अगात् - acquires. - (7)

7. The union of reflected pure awareness (*cicchāyā*/चिच्छाया) and the ego is like that of iron and heat in a red-hot iron ball. The physical body acquires sentiency due to its union with the ego, (in a like manner).

The word *chāyā* means a reflection. In this verse *chāyā* refers to the reflection of pure awareness. Its synonyms are *cicchāyā* (चिच्छाया), *citicchāyā*, *cidābhāsa*, *caitanyābhāsa*

and *ātmābhāsa*. For convenience, we shall hereafter use the word *cidābhāsa* for the reflected pure awareness.

*Taptāyaḥpiṇḍa* is a red-hot iron ball which virtually looks like a fireball. The ball glows. The fire permeates in and through the iron ball. It is not possible to separate the fire from the iron when the ball is red-hot. Similarly the separation in the ego of the inert thought content from the reflection of pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) in it is not possible. That is why, like the iron ball appearing as fireball because of the fire, the inert thought constituting the ego always appears sentient, because of *cidābhāsa*. The union between the ego (*ahankāra*) and the reflection of pure awareness makes them appear identical with each other like in the red-hot iron ball.

The erroneous "I" notion(*ahankāra*/ego) is already sentient due to its prior union with the reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*). This treats the entire embodiment as its object. The inert physical body gets united with the sentient ego when erroneously considered as "I". On account of this union between the physical body and the ego the sentiency in the latter extends to or gets infused in the physical body. As a result the inert body acquires apparent sentiency. Sleep proves this fact. The ego is not manifest in sleep. Thereby the physical body remains insensible - volitionally non-operative - during sleep.

The self-existent, independent cognitive principle, true "I" - pure awareness/*sākṣī* - is free from all the superimposed features. Yet, it makes the individual embodiment starting from ego to the gross body aglow with sentiency. It is like an emerald infusing its brightness in the region around it when thrown in milk. This was the mode of testing emeralds in the olden days.

Depending on the context, the words *aikyam* and *tādātmyam* employed in the verse mean the sameness of nature, reflection or union i.e. one projecting in the other, unity - appearance of oneness - or the status of being identical with each other.

So far the union of ego (*ahaṅkāra*) with reflected pure awareness and the body has been established. Based on our experiences, "I see", "I hear", etc. one may raise a doubt whether there is a separate identity or union of ego (*ahaṅkāra*) with each of the senses in our body. The answer is, it cannot be so. The senses cannot function without their external counterparts in the physical body. The body and its parts, viz. the external organs, are not separate entities. There is no separate union of the ego with each of the senses. This can also be verified from our experiences. We say, "I am a man.", "I am a woman.", "I am tall.", "I am short.", etc. but never do we say, "I am the eye.", "I am the ear.", etc. When asked, "Who are you?", the person replies as "I" by pointing out to the body but not to any of the senses alone. Even the Japanese while showing "I", mean only their body when they point out to the face, and not the face itself.

### THREE CONNECTIONS OF THE EGO (*AHĀṆKĀRA*) AND THE TYPES OF THEIR UNITY

The entity that is finally responsible for the *saṃsāra* will be indicated in verse twelve. For practical purposes it is the ego (*ahaṅkāra*) that runs the entire show of *saṃsāra*. It is desirable to know more about the modus operandi and connections of *ahaṅkāra* (ego). The next verse discloses the exact nature of the types of union or identity the ego (*ahaṅkāra*) has with other entities.

अहङ्कारस्य तादात्म्यं चिच्छायादेहसाक्षिभिः ।  
सहजं कर्मजं भ्रान्तिजन्यञ्च त्रिविधं क्रमात् ॥८॥

*ahaṅkārasya tādātmyaṁ cicchāyādehasākṣibhiḥ  
sahajaṁ karmajaṁ bhrāntijanyaṁca trividhaṁ kramāt - (8)*

अहङ्कारस्य - of ego (*ahaṅkāra*) तादात्म्यं - unity or identity  
चिच्छायादेहसाक्षिभिः - with the reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*),  
physical body and pure awareness (*sākṣī*) क्रमात् - sequentially  
सहजं - inborn कर्मजं - born of *karma* (results of actions) भ्रान्तिजन्यं  
- erroneous or born (*janyaṁ*) of self-ignorance च - and (इति -  
thus) त्रिविधं - of three types (अस्ति - is). - (8)

8. The unity (or identity) of ego (*ahaṅkāra*) with the reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*), the physical body and pure awareness (*sākṣī*) is of three types, viz. inborn, born of *karma* (results of actions) and erroneous (i.e. born of self-ignorance), in that sequence.

The doer "I" called *ahaṅkāra* has its relation or unity with three things. These are the reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*), the physical body (*deha*) and pure awareness (*sākṣī*). However the type of unity - seeming oneness - differs in each case due to the difference in the causes that bring about the unity between *ahaṅkāra* and the three related things. The justification of the names given to these three types of unity can be seen from the following:

i) *Sahajaṁ tādātmyaṁ* - Inborn unity:

The unity between ego (*ahaṅkāra*) and the reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) is inborn (*sahajaṁ*). It is a union that

Depending on the context, the words *aikyam* and *tādātmyam* employed in the verse mean the sameness of nature, reflection or union i.e. one projecting in the other, unity - appearance of oneness - or the status of being identical with each other.

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i) *Sahajaṁ tādātmyam* - Inborn unity:

The unity between ego (*ahaṅkāra*) and the reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) is inborn (*sahajaṁ*). It is a union that

comes into existence at the time of very birth of *ahaṅkāra* and *cidābhāsa*. The thought (*vr̥tti*) of *ahaṅkāra* without the reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) and vice versa is not possible. Pure awareness is all-pervasive. The moment the thought (*vr̥tti*) of *ahaṅkāra* is born, the reflection of pure awareness gets spontaneously cast in it. At the same time the reflection of pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) is impossible without the reflecting medium of the thought of wrong "I" notion. This inborn unity holds good in case of all the other thoughts (*vr̥ttis*) irrespective of their functions.

- (ii) *Karmajaṃ tādātmyam* - Unity born of *karma* (results of actions):

The ego (*ahaṅkāra*) who conducts itself as the doer (*kartā*) and the experiencer (*bhoktā*), has unity with the physical body only in the waking state. This state is the main avenue for experiencing while awake the results of past actions (*karmaphalas*) done. In sleep the results of actions yielding vivid experiences as in the waking state are not manifest. Moreover the unity of ego (*ahaṅkāra*) with the physical body is also absent in sleep. Thus the unity between the ego (*ahaṅkāra*) and the physical body is born only by *karmaphalas* (results of actions) producing the waking state experiences. So, aptly it is called *karmajaṃ* - born of *karma*. Even the unique embodiment of each individual is born of results of past actions (*karma*).

- (iii) *Bhrāntijanyaṃ tādātmyam* - Identification born of self-ignorance:

*Bhrānti* means an error or an illusion. *Bhrāntijanyaṃ*

therefore literally means erroneous. But the word *bhrānti* is used here to mean ignorance of the true "I" (*ātmā*), the root cause of *bhrānti*. The cause can be termed after its effect. The mutual identification between the true "I" (*ātmā/sākṣī*) and erroneous "I" (*ahaṅkāra*) is verily born of ignorance of true "I". This ignorance is beginningless and inexplicable. So the name *bhrāntijanyam* is appropriate.

The cognitive principle, true "I" (*ātmā*) is the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of ego (*ahaṅkāra*) and the Creation. Ignorance of the basis allows projection of many misapprehensions about its nature. For example, a rope in darkness may be mistaken for a snake or a stick etc. Such misapprehension about the rope disappears, the moment that rope is seen with proper light. The knowledge of the rope as the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) dispels the superimposed (*adhyasta*) snake or stick etc. projected by ignorance. The knowledge of the true "I" (*ātmā/sākṣī*), the basis of ego (*ahaṅkāra*) as the rope and the snake, ends the identification of *ahaṅkāra* with *sākṣī* (true "I"). This fact also validates the statement that the identification of ego (*ahaṅkāra*) with the true "I" (*sākṣī*) is born of self-ignorance.

## UNITIES BORN OF KARMA AND SELF-IGNORANCE END

The apparent connections of ego (*ahaṅkāra*) with the physical body and the true "I" (*sākṣī*/pure awareness) can be ended by elimination of their respective causes. Absence of *kārmās* (results of actions) yielding waking state experiences terminates the connection between ego (*ahaṅkāra*) and the physical body. An end to the identification of ego (*ahaṅkāra*) with pure awareness (true "I") can be brought about only by self-knowledge. There is no other way. However, the inborn unity, because it is inborn (innate), cannot be ended. The ninth verse details these three aspects.

सम्बन्धिनोऽसतोऽस्ति निवृत्तिः सहजस्य तु ।  
कर्मक्षयात्प्रबोधाच्च निवर्तेते क्रमादुभे ॥९॥

*sambandhinossatornāsti nivṛttiḥ sahajasya tu  
karmakṣayāt prabodhācca nivartete kramādubhe - (9)*

सम्बन्धिनोः सतोः - of the two connected (by birth itself) सहजस्य - of inborn unity तु - indeed निवृत्तिः - termination न अस्ति - is not there उभे - the (other) two (unities) कर्मक्षयात् - by the ending of *karmas* (results of actions) प्रबोधात् - by self-knowledge च - and क्रमात् - respectively निवर्तेते - (the two) cease/disappear. - (9)

9. The termination of the inborn unity pertaining to the two connected by birth itself is indeed not there. The other two unities cease by the ending of *karmas* (results of actions) and self-knowledge respectively.

The unity between the erroneous "I" notion (*ahaṅkāra*) and reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) is from the time of the birth. The connection between them is thus inborn. That their unity cannot be terminated, means *ahaṅkāra* cannot be separated from *cidābhāsa*. Any one of them without the other cannot exist at all. So long as the body exists, the reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) born of the thought of erroneous "I" (*ahaṅkāra*) will always be present as long as *ahaṅkāra* exists. It is like the continuance of the reflection of sun in a bucketful of water kept in the open sun. The reflection will not be there only when there is no water in the bucket. Similar phenomenon also operates in the reflection of pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) in all the thoughts.

The operation of other two unities stops on the non-functioning of their corresponding causes. During sleep and swoon or in death, results of actions (*karmaphalas*) yielding waking state experiences do not operate. At such time the ego (*ahaṅkāra*) and the physical body give up their mutual connections, brought about by their unity born due to *karmas*. *Karmaja tādātmya* - unity born of *karma* - is programmed. It has its own course according to the results of actions capable of producing waking state experiences. Practically there is little that an individual can do to overcome this unity.

To end the identification born of self-ignorance falls under the ambit of human choice. Appropriate self-effort is indispensable to sever the assumed ties between ego (*ahaṅkāra*) and the ultimate cognitive principle, the true "I" (*sākṣī*). One has to inquire into one's true nature and the basis of the Creation. This is to be done by exposing oneself to the proper teaching based on the *Upaniṣads* from a competent teacher. The discovery that "I" in reality is nothing but Brahman, the basis of the Creation, i.e. *ahaṁ Brahma asmi*, snaps off the mistaken identification born of self-ignorance (*bhrāntijanyaṁ tādātmyam*). Thereafter the ego (*ahaṅkāra*) disappears in its basis the true "I", like the superimposed silver vanishing from the sea-shell on seeing its actual basis - the shell. For a *jñānī* - person of self-knowledge (*ātmajñāna*) - there is no erroneous "I" notion (*ahaṅkāra*). Yet, seeing the person of self-knowledge (*jñānī*) interacting in the world, the ignorant folks carry a wrong impression that such a person has ego (*ahaṅkāra*). An undisturbed burnt rope may still retain the appearance of a rope but it is non-functional. It cannot bind anything. So is the case with *ahaṅkāra*. It appears to be there in a *jñānī* from other's standpoint, but in reality it is non-functional.

## THE THREE STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The sum total of all our experiences called *samsāra* is comprised in our daily three cyclic - circadian - states of consciousness. They are the states of waking, dream and deep sleep. How exactly the ego (*ahaṅkāra*) authors these three states of consciousness is shown now. Incidentally the inert nature of our physical body is also made clear.

अहङ्कारलये सुप्तौ भवेद्देहोऽप्यचेतनः ।

अहङ्कारविकासार्धः स्वप्नः सर्वस्तु जागरः ॥१०॥

*ahaṅkāralaye suptau bhaveddehopyacetanaḥ*

*ahaṅkāravikāsārdhaḥ svapnaḥ sarvastu jāgaraḥ - (10)*

सुप्तौ - in deep sleep      अहङ्कारलये - when the erroneous "I" notion (*ahaṅkāra*) disappears      देहः - the physical body      अपि - also  
अचेतनः - insensible      भवेत् - becomes      अहङ्कारविकासार्धः - the half growth (or manifestation) of *ahaṅkāra*      स्वप्नः - (is called) dream      सर्वः (विकासः) - complete (manifestation)      तु - whereas  
जागरः - (is) waking state. - (10)

10. When the erroneous "I" notion (*ahaṅkāra*) disappears in deep sleep, the physical body also becomes insensible - volitionally non-operative. The half manifestation of *ahaṅkāra* is called dream whereas (its) complete manifestation is the waking state.

The erroneous "I" notion (*ahaṅkāra*) born of self-ignorance is the director of our lives. Making use of the programs of the results of past actions, *ahaṅkāra* experiences waking and dream states.

The two sets of results of actions (*karmaphalas*) that produce the waking state and dream experiences are also distinct from each other.

## THE DEEP SLEEP STATE

In the absence of these two types of results of actions, *ahaṅkāra* daily merges in its cause, the self-ignorance. This phenomenon of its merger is called the deep sleep state. The physical body which was responding in the waking state by its unity with *ahaṅkāra* becomes insensible (*acetana*) in sleep. Besides these statements made in Vedas, our experience of sleep also confirms this fact. *Chāndogyopaniṣad* declares, "In sleep a blind person is not aware of his blindness, the wounded one is not aware of the wound, the afflicted person is not aware of those afflictions etc." (*Ch.U.* 8-4-2).

## THE DREAM STATE

The results of the actions capable of producing the subtle experiences of dream have, as their basis, the impressions of experiences during the waking state. When the dream experience is imminent, there is a part or half (*vikāsārdhaḥ*) manifestation of *ahaṅkāra* (ego). It is a state wherein the erroneous "I" notion (*ahaṅkāra*) functions without getting identified with the physical body. Indeed, in that state *ahaṅkāra* exerts its activity in the *nāḍīs*.

What exactly are these *nāḍīs* alluded to and expanded upon in the *Upaniṣads* and the scriptures on Yoga, is a matter of interesting, prospective research.

Consistent with the observations made in *Upaniṣads*, *Yogic* texts, literature of *Āyurveda* - the traditional Indian medical science, as also the allopathic derivation of the term "nerve" from Sanskrit root *nāḍī*, it can be concluded that *nāḍīs* are the various nerves that emerge from roundabout the heart. The main ones have been computed to be 101, each of them branching into a hundred, and each of the latter sub-branching into 72,000. The total tally works out to be the figure of 727210201. They are spread all over the body and constitute the integral parts of both the somatic and the autonomic nervous systems. The thickest nerve of the body called sciatic nerve in standard modern anatomy, is named in *Āyurveda* as *gr̥dhraśī nāḍī*. It is all the more interesting that the ailment sciatica, the term used in modern medicine, is called *gr̥dhraśī* in *Āyurvedic* parlance.

*Nāḍīs* have been clearly referred to in the *Praśna* (3-6), *Kaṭha* (2-3-16), *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* (2-1-19) and *Chāndogya* (8-6-1 to 6) *Upaniṣads*. According to *Āyurveda*, the *nāḍīs* are coloured reddish brown, white, blue, yellow or red, depending on their content of *kafa*, *vāta*, *pitta* and *rakta*, the humours permeating the human body. After describing to some extent the causation of the varying colours, Ādi Śaṅkarācārya in his commentary (*Ch.U.* 8-6-1), suggests that the how and why of the *nāḍī* colours may better be gleaned from *Āyurveda*. Knowing that the sciences of neuroanatomy and neurophysiology are in a highly fluid state, modern medical science may stand to gain quite a few illuminating insights from the wisdom of *Āyurveda*.

The function of the "I" notion (*ahaṅkāra*) in *nāḍīs* without the gross body and the actual external objects is called *vikāśārdha* - half manifestation or growth - of *ahaṅkāra*. Dream experiences are produced in this way. It is a state of experience based on the



impressions born of waking state. The absence of external objects corresponding to those seen in the dream is a matter of universal experience. There are passages in *Śruti* - the Vedas - confirming this fact. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* it is said, "In dream there are no chariots, no horses and roads" (*Bṛ. U. 4-3-9*).

## THE WAKING STATE

*Ahaṅkāra* identifies itself with the entire physical body when the results of actions (*karmaphalas*) having the blueprint of waking state experiences are ready to manifest. Such an identification is called *sarvavikāsa* - complete manifestation - of *ahaṅkāra*. During the waking state the erroneous "I" notion (ego) operates through all the senses but with the world of objects, beings, and events. Due to the identification with *ahaṅkāra*, the hitherto unconscious - non-operative - physical body becomes conscious - starts operating - in the waking state. There is greater vividness in the waking state experiences than in those of dream state though *ahaṅkāra* (ego) is active in both. The functioning of all the external senses and the presence of external objects in the waking state are responsible for this difference. More about the three states of experience can be known from the *Upaniṣads* like *Māṇḍūkya* and *Tāpanīya* etc.

## FUNCTIONS OF MANA ASPECT OF INNER INSTRUMENT (ANTAḤKARAṆA)

From verse seven onwards, the functions of the doer "I" (*ahaṅkāra*) aspect of the two-sided inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) - was described. The other aspect of the same inner instrument, called *mana* - mentioned as *antaḥkaraṇarūpīṇī*

*dhiḥ* - in verse six, is also highly active. Its functions are as follows:

अन्तःकरणवृत्तिश्च चित्तिच्छायैक्यमागता ।

वासनाः कल्पयेत् स्वप्ने बोधेऽक्षैर्विषयान्बहिः ॥११॥

*antaḥkaraṇavṛttiśca citicchāyaikyamāgatā*

*vāsanāḥ kalpayet svapne bodheḥśairviṣayānbahiḥ* - (11)

अन्तःकरणवृत्तिः - The inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) of the nature of thought (i.e. *mana* - mind) च - also चित्तिच्छायैक्यमागता - is united with the reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) (सा - that *vṛtti*/thought) स्वप्ने - in dream वासनाः - fancies (mental images) कल्पयेत् - produces/creates बोधे - during the waking state अक्षैः - with the sense organs विषयान् - sense objects बहिः - externally (कल्पयेत् - produces/creates). - (11)

11. The inner instrument of the nature of thought is also united with the reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*). It produces the mental images in dream (whereas) during the waking state with the sense organs it creates the sense objects externally.

*Antaḥkaraṇavṛtti* mentioned in this verse indicates the inner instrument in the form of thought (*vṛtti*). Contentwise it refers to *mana* (mind) functioning as the instrument at the disposal of doer "I" (*aḥaṅkāra*). This aspect was specified in the commentary of the sixth verse.

The conjunction *ca* - also - is to highlight some of the similarities between the unity of *aḥaṅkāra* (the erroneous "I" notion) and

reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) on one hand and the unity of mind (*mana*) and *cidābhāsa* on the other. The thoughts (*vṛttis*) constituting the mind (*mana*) are inert like that of erroneous "I" notion (*ahaṅkāra*). The erroneous "I" notion acquires the cognitive faculty on account of the reflected pure awareness. So is the case with *mana* (the mind). The unity of the reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) and the mind (*mana*) is like the red-hot iron ball non-separable in two distinct components. There is an inseparable inborn unity of mind and the reflected pure awareness. The connection of mind with the physical body makes perceptions and actions possible. This link is due to the results of actions (*karmaphala*) which are capable of yielding the waking state experiences. This connection ceases in the absence of such results of actions. The mind is mistakenly identified with pure awareness (*sākṣī*) on account of self-ignorance. In this wrong identification the features of body along with all the experiences undergone by it are superimposed on the true "I" (*sākṣī*). Such erroneous identification can disappear only in the wake of self-knowledge.

The mind also like the erroneous "I" notion (*ahaṅkāra*) disappears in sleep. It has half manifestation (*ardhavigāsa*) in dream and full manifestation (*sarvavigāsa*) in the waking state. When the results of actions producing the dream are ready, the mind in union with *cidābhāsa* (reflected pure awareness) becomes active in *nāḍīs*, to manifest as dream. The mind gets connected to the physical body when the specific results of actions are ready to produce the waking state experiences. Therein the mind creates with the help of sense organs the external sense objects. The creation of external sense objects by the mind may be questioned because they are there even before the individual was born, leave alone his or her mind creating them. The entire Creation is

authored by the Creator - *Īśvara*. Yes, the public Creation in general is certainly created by the Creator (*Īśvara*); yet its features that actually produce the varied experiences are created by the individual mind. That is why the same manifest world is perceived differently by different persons. For some it may be a mansion of merriment or a heaven and for others the same world may be a dungeon of drudgery or a hell.

The inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) is shown to have two distinct facets viz. *ahaṅkāra* (ego) and the *mana* (the mind). This method has been adopted to analyse the different functions and facets of *antaḥkaraṇa*. *Ahaṅkāra* (ego) has the status of being the doer (*kartā*) with regard to the mind (*mana*) operating as a means (*karaṇa*). The same *ahaṅkāra* however becomes a means (*karaṇa*) in relation to its basis, the entire inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) mentioned as *buddhi* in verse six.

## THE ACTUAL *SAṂSĀRA* AND ITS MAIN PRODUCER

It is the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) who is the main producer of *saṁsāra*. *Antaḥkaraṇa* provides a scope for the reflected pure awareness (*citicchāya/cidābhāsa*) to come into existence. The reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) in turn having its nexus with self-ignorance, becomes an accomplice in the fraudulent superimposition of the embodiment accompanied by its limitations, its vagaries, ills and sorrows, on the true "I" (*ātmā*). As a result of this, the true "I" despite being totally free from the embodiment and its features, falsely appears as a limited creature called *saṁsārī*. This explains the generation of the sufferer called *saṁsārī* or *jīva* even though true "I" (*ātmā*) and the inert embodiment individually cannot have the *saṁsāra*. To summarise,

for practical understanding the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) is totally responsible for *saṃsāra* even though self-ignorance is at the root of this fundamental problem. The basic nature and functions in nutshell of inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*), without considering its division of *ahaṅkāra* and *mana* separately, as the main producer of *saṃsāra* is described now.

मनोहङ्कृत्युपादानं लिङ्गमेकं जडात्मकम् ।  
अवस्थात्रयमन्वेति जायते म्रियते तथा ॥१२॥

*manohaṅkṛtyupādānaṃ liṅgamekaṃ jadātmakam*  
*avasthātrayamanveti jāyate mriyate tathā - (12)*

मनोहङ्कृत्युपादानं - the material cause (*upādānam*) of mind and the erroneous "I" notion (*ahaṅkāra*), viz. *antaḥkaraṇa* लिङ्गं - the subtle body (*sūkṣma-śarīra*) एकं - (is) the same जडात्मकम् (is) of inert nature अवस्थात्रयम् - the three states of consciousness अन्वेति - gains तथा - as well as जायते - is born म्रियते - dies. - (12)

12. The thing called *antaḥkaraṇa* (the inner instrument) is the same as the subtle body and is of inert nature. It gains the three states of consciousness, it is born and it dies.

The material cause of mind (*mana*) and ego (*ahaṅkāra*) is the thing called *antaḥkaraṇa*. It is identical with *liṅgam* - the subtle body (*sūkṣma-śarīra*). Literally *liṅgam* means a sign or a mark. The Indian logicians derive its etymology as - that which makes one cognise an invisible thing (*līnam arthaṃ gamayati iti*). That because of which something is known (*liṅgyate anena iti*) also

means *liṅgam*. The following account justifies the etymological meanings:

- i) The cognition of sentiency in our embodiment is possible only on account of reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) that gets produced in *antaḥkaraṇa*.
- ii) The nature of true "I" - *ātmā* identical with Brahman - is cognisable by a peculiar *vṛtti* (thought) called *akhaṇḍākāra vṛtti*.

Thus *antaḥkaraṇa* serves as the means to cognise sentiency and gain self-knowledge - unknown otherwise.

There is a definition of *liṅgam* found in Vedānta at variance with what is stated here, i.e. equating the entire *antaḥkaraṇa* (inner instrument) to the subtle body. This can raise a pertinent doubt. The subtle body (*sūkṣma-śarīra*) having seventeen facets comprising five sense organs, five organs of action and five vital airs (*prāṇas*) along with mind and intellect, i.e. *antaḥkaraṇa*, is called *liṅgam* (P.1-23). If this definition of Vedānta is accepted, the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) can at best be only a part of subtle body (*liṅgam*) but not the whole of it.

A closer scrutiny of seventeen parts of subtle body will clear up the seeming disagreement found in both the definitions. Vedānta at places speaks of sense organs, organs of action and the vital airs (*prāṇas*), totally fifteen in number, as separate entities made of five subtle elements. But this distinction between them and the *antaḥkaraṇa* (inner instrument) named as mind and intellect, is a practical rather than an actual one. The pentads of sense organs, organs of action and the vital airs (*prāṇas*) totally depend on the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*)

for their functions. While functioning with *antaḥkaraṇa*, they are in essence nothing but two types of *antaḥkaraṇa-vṛttis* (thoughts). Sense organs function due to the cognitive power (*jñāna-śakti*), and *prāṇas* (vital airs) with organs of action are fuelled by the power of action (*kriyā-śakti*). They all are accounted separately when required to bring about the distinction between the sense organs etc. and their functions. Essentially the three pentads and *antaḥkaraṇa*, all being *vṛttis* (thoughts), are identical. So the word *ekam* used in this verse suggesting the sameness or identical nature of *antaḥkaraṇa* - the material cause of mind and ego - and the subtle body called *liṅgam*, is quite tenable.

Such an *antaḥkaraṇa* (inner instrument) identical with *liṅgam* (subtle body) is itself inert. Yet, on the strength of the reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) that gets cast in it, it takes itself as true "I" (*ātmā*) and assumes even the gross body as "I". Thereafter, it is this inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) after having its unity with the reflected pure awareness, that undergoes the three states of consciousness depending on its different degrees of functional manifestations as pointed out in verse ten. The three states of consciousness are solely programmed by the results of actions (*karmaphala*). The *antaḥkaraṇa* even gets itself subjected to birth and death as directed by the results of actions. Casting off the existing physical body by *antaḥkaraṇa* is called death and its entry into a new one to wield is the next birth. The word *tathā* from the verse indicates the non-stop cycles of repeated birth and death prompted by unending results of actions until the self-knowledge is gained. The incessant *saṃsara* consisting of sorrow, fleeting joy, fear, anger, greed, delusion, insatiable hankering, etc. belongs exclusively to this *antaḥkaraṇa* united with the reflected pure awareness, and not to the true "I" (*ātmā*). The *liṅgam* (subtle body) being identical with *antaḥkaraṇa* will be elaborated in verse sixteen.

Words cannot describe the attributeless true "I" (*ātmā*/Brahman) directly. But the presence of reflection of pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) non-distinguishable from *antaḥkāraṇa*, provides indirectly an access to the words to indicate what the true "I" (*ātmā*), pure awareness is. Any reflection does indicate the nature of the original thing. Vedānta, making use of *cidābhāsa*, unfolds through words the true "I" (*ātmā*), and thereby serves as a valid means (*pramāṇa*) of gaining self-knowledge.



# THE FINAL CAUSE OF MUNDANE EXISTENCE (SAMSĀRA) AND ITS REMEDY

## THE NATURE OF CREATIVE POWER (MĀYĀ)

The nature of inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) also called *liṅgam* (subtle body), as the producer of *samsāra* - the flux of our mundane existence - was shown. But the root cause of *antaḥkaraṇa* and the entire Creation is the Creative power called *māyā*. It is a principle that depends for its existence on Brahman, the all-pervasive pure awareness. *Māyā* is not an ever-existent thing because it gets destroyed in the wake of self-knowledge; it is not totally non-existent either as its effect called the Creation is quite evident. So *māyā* cannot be described as *sat* (the ever-existent thing) nor can it be said as *asat* (non-existent). In the absence of a categorical definition as either *sat* or *asat*, Vedānta calls *māyā* as undefinable - *anirvacanīyā*. The effect of *māyā*, the Creation, is unfailingly experienced and yet both the Creation and its cause, *māyā*, disappear on knowing Brahman, the basis of everything. It is like the disappearance of dream on waking up. *Māyā* is therefore called false - *mithyā*. The word *mithyā* (false) does not permit assigning *māyā* the status of absolute reality, but does leave scope to have the experiential nature of its effect. The presence of the Creative power (*māyā*) can only be inferred through its effects (i.e. *karyānumeyā*). The words *avidyā* (self-ignorance), *ajñāna* (self-ignorance), *tamaḥ* (darkness of self-ignorance), *moha* (erroneous

notion about oneself and the Creation) are synonymous with *māyā*. It is the root cause of calamitous mundane existence - *saṁsāra* - too. The nature of *māyā* is being shown now by describing its two powers.

शक्तिद्वयं हि मायाया विक्षेपावृतिरूपकम् ।  
विक्षेपशक्तिर्लिङ्गादिब्रह्माण्डान्तं जगत्सृजेत् ॥१३॥

*śaktidvayaṁ hi māyāyā vikṣepāvṛtirūpakam  
vikṣepaśaktirliṅgādi-brahmāṇḍāntam jagatsṛjet - (13)*

मायायाः - of the Creative power (*māyā*) विक्षेपावृतिरूपकम् - having the features of projecting (creating) and veiling शक्तिद्वयम् - a pair of powers हि - as is well known (in the scripture) (अस्ति - is) विक्षेपशक्तिः - the projecting power लिङ्गादिब्रह्माण्डान्तं - beginning from inner instrument (*liṅgam*) and ending with the universe जगत् - the world सृजेत् - creates. - (13)

13. As is well known (in the scripture), the Creative power (*māyā*) has a pair of powers having the features of projection and veiling. The power of projection creates the world - from inner instrument (*liṅgam*) onwards to the (gross) universe (*S.R.U.* 52).

The power of veiling (*āvṛti* or *āvaraṇa śakti*) and the power of projection (*vikṣepa śakti*) are the two aspects of one and the same Creative power called *māyā*. Some self-styled scholars have wrongly criticised Ādi Śaṅkarācārya for coining the word *māyā* without having any basis for it in the Vedas. *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad* from *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda* and *Nṛsimha pūrva* and *uttara tāpinyopaniṣads* from *Atharvāna Veda* speak of *māyā* explicitly. The word *hi* - as is well known - in the verse

shows the celebrity of *māyā* and its powers as described in the *Upaniṣads*.

Ideally the veiling power (*āvaraṇa śakti*) ought to have been mentioned first in the verse. Any misapprehension of a thing is possible only after its non-apprehension. Without the veiling of the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) no false things can be projected on it. A rope can be mistaken as a snake only when the rope is not seen clearly. However, the author has placed the projecting power (*vikṣepa śakti*) first only to maintain the prosodic meter.

### THE PROJECTING POWER OF *MĀYĀ*

The nature of the projecting power (*vikṣepa-śakti*) of *māyā* is described in the second half of this verse and the next one. The veiling power (*āvaraṇa śakti*) of *māyā* covers true "I", identical with Brahman. This provides a basis to the projecting power to manifest the Creation. As mentioned above the description of veiling power has to be given first, prior to the elaboration of projecting power. The reason for not doing so may be one or more as given below:

- i) We do experience the veiling power daily in our sleep. So, there cannot be any contention about its existence.
- ii) The veiling power (*āvaraṇa śakti*) does deny us appreciation of true nature of *Brahmānanda* - absolute bliss - and subject us to *saṃsāra*. But it can do so only with help of the projecting power (*vikṣepa śakti*). Thus the projecting power makes the veiling one operative.
- iii) For veiling power to function in its full measure, the projecting

power has to effect the Creation first. Then only the veiling power by its specific aspect of self-ignorance (*avidyā*) covers the natural distinction between our entire embodiment and the true "I" (pure awareness/*sākṣī*). It is this self-ignorance aspect of the veiling power (*āvaraṇa śakti*) that really produces the calamitous *samsāra*. So the actual adverse aspect of veiling power functionally operates later than projecting power.

This makes it essential to know first the details of projecting power in order to understand the exact havoc played by the subsequent veiling.

*Vikṣepa* means manifold actions (*karaṇam*) or appearances (*bhānam*) or productions (*bhavanam*). The power that is endowed with manifold actions, appearances or productions is *vikṣepa śakti* - the projecting power. *Vikṣepa śakti* presents a perfect semblance of having accomplished a task that is just next to impossible. The all pervasive non-dual pure awareness (*citātmā*) called Brahman is free from all limitations. It has no divisions (*bheda*) in itself (*svagata*), or no other member having the same species (*sajātīya*). There is no division either on account of other species (*vi-jātīya*). Only a limited thing can modify itself or get destroyed. Pure awareness is not amenable to any change brought about by itself or through any other agent. Yet the projecting power (*vikṣepa śakti*) transforms as it were the pure awareness (*cit*) into varied divisions like the waker consciousness (*viśva*), dreamer consciousness (*taijasa*) and sleeper consciousness (*prājñā*) at the individual level and the presiding deities at the totality level. The presiding deities are *Virāt*, *Hiraṇyagarbha* and *Antaryāmi Īśvara* respectively at the macrocosmic gross, subtle and causal levels. It is like falsely projecting a rope as a snake or a garland etc. which in reality is just not possible. The pure awareness though one, without any change

in itself appears as if there are manifold gross and the subtle worlds. This is due to the impact of inexplicable projecting power.

The Creation comes into existence (*jaayate*) when the projecting power manifests itself and gets extinct (*layam gacchati*) on the withdrawal of effect of the projecting power. Therefore the world is called *jagat* - that which is born and gone. The Creation beginning from all the subtle bodies (*liṅga*) and ending with the entire gross world is falsely projected by *vikṣepa śakti*. The five subtle elements, viz. space, air, fire, water and earth are created first. Certain aspects of these constitute the instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*), sense organs, organs of action and vital airs (*prāṇas*). Thereafter their remaining parts undergo a process known as grossification (*pañcīkaraṇa*) giving rise to perceptible (grossified) elements. These gross elements in turn create the gross perceptible physical bodies and the entire gross world. More details about the order and the process involved in the Creation is available in texts such as *Taittirīyopaniṣad*, *Pañcadaśī* (Ch.1) and *Tattvabodha*.

This verse corresponds to the fiftysecond *mantra* of *Sarasvatī Rahasyopaniṣad*. Henceforward these references are mentioned after the translation of the relevant verses.

The *vikṣepa śakti* (projecting power) is further elaborated now through the description of the exact nature of its effect, the Creation.

सृष्टिर्नाम ब्रह्मरूपे सच्चिदानन्दवस्तुनि ।  
अब्धौ फेनादिवत्सर्वनामरूपप्रसारणा ॥१४॥

*sṛṣṭirnāma brahmarūpe saccidānandavastuni*  
*abdhau phenādivat sarva-nāma-rūpa-prasāraṇā - (14)*

सच्चिदानन्दवस्तुनि - in the thing *sat* (the ever-existence principle) *cit* (the knowledge-principle) *ānanda* (the absolute bliss) ब्रह्मरूपे - namely Brahman सर्वनामरूपप्रसारणा - expansion (i.e. manifestation) of all the names and forms सृष्टिः - the Creation नाम - name (i.e. is called) अब्धौ - in the ocean फेनादिवत् - (it is) like the foam etc. - (14)

14. In the thing *sat-cit-ānanda* namely Brahman the manifestation of all the names and forms is called the Creation. It is like the foam etc. in the ocean.

Brahman, the existence principle (*sat*), the basis of the Creation, does not change, modify or get destroyed. Brahman itself is the self-evident knowledge principle (*cit*). It is also bliss absolute (*ānanda*). Any creation or birth necessarily entails modification. In reality, no creation is ever possible in Brahman. And yet, if there appears to be one, that creation has to be of the *vivarta* type wherein a given thing without changing itself appears as something else. We do find such instances in the world. A rope can appear as a snake. An oyster shell can be mistaken for a piece of silver. Similarly Brahman appearing as all forms and their names is called the Creation. This of course is the effect accomplished by the projecting power (*vikṣepa śakti*) of *māyā*. *Nāma* means the name and *rūpa* is the form. This is done in the sense of distinguishing a given thing as a separate and distinct entity from the rest of them. Other than these two there is nothing in the Creation.

The author gives an illustration to describe the inherent capacity of projecting power capable of creating a false effect. This shows the false nature of the Creation too. An ocean remains all the time as ocean but is seen as waves, bubbles and foam. This is

brought about by powers such as surface tension inherent in the ocean itself. In reality, oceanic waves, bubbles and foam have no existence independent of the ocean. Yet to an indiscriminate person they appear to be distinct entities having different names and forms. The ocean is the truth and the foam, bubble etc. are projections superimposed. Similarly the projecting power (*vikṣepa - śakti*) superimposes the false world on Brahman. The Creation is false, but its basis the Brahman is the ultimate truth. The word *vastu* - the thing - employed in the verse shows the distinction of Brahman from the non-entities (*avastu*) the superimposed names and forms.

The projecting power was described to depict the nature of *māyā* (the Creative power). The description of *māyā* is continued further by showing the effects of its veiling power (*āvaraṇa śakti*).

#### THE VEILING POWER OF MĀYĀ

अन्तर्दृश्ययोर्भेदं बहिश्च ब्रह्मसर्गयोः ।

आवृणोत्यपरा शक्तिः सा संसारस्य कारणम् ॥१५॥

*antardṛgdr̥śyayorbhedaṃ bahiṣca brahmasargayoḥ  
āvṛṇotyaparā śaktiḥ sā saṃsārasya kāraṇam - (15)*

अपरा - the other शक्तिः - power, viz. the veiling power  
अन्तः - within (the physical body) दृग्दृश्ययोः - of cognitive principle and the cognised भेदं - mutual distinction बहिः - externally ब्रह्मसर्गयोः - of Brahman and the Creation (भेदं - mutual distinction) आवृणोति - covers सा - she i.e. that (veiling power) संसारस्य - of *saṃsāra* कारणम् - is the cause. - (15)

15. The other aspect, viz. the veiling power of *māyā* covers the mutual distinction of cognitive principle and the cognised within the physical body (at an individual level of internal world) and that of Brahman and the Creation, externally (in the external world). The veiling power is the cause of *saṃsāra* (S.R.U. 53).

The nature of *dṛk* - pure awareness, the ultimate cognitive principle called *sākṣī* or *citi* - and *dṛśya* ( the cognised/ known) was described in the first five verses of this text. The mutual distinction between the two makes them poles apart.

The true "I" (*sākṣī/dṛk*) is nothing but pure awareness, the cognitive principle, totally free from all the known (*dṛśya*) including the status of experiencer (*bhoktā*) or the doer (*kartā*). These two statuses appear as if belonging to the true "I" due to erroneous identification with the gross, subtle and causal bodies. In contrast to the nature of true "I" (*ātmā / dṛk*), the not-self (*anātmā*) - from ego (*ahaṅkāra*) to the physical body - is inert. The final *dṛk* (*sākṣī*) is absolute happiness and it is free from the six types of modification. *Dṛśya* is the source of all sorrows and is in a flux of change. The *dṛk* and *dṛśya* have nothing in common.

Brahman and the Creation are the corresponding *dṛk* and *dṛśya* aspects at the macrocosmic level respectively. Brahman the all pervasive pure awareness principle is self-existent. It is independent of the Creation comprising all the names and forms. Brahman is changeless and is not a thing to be experienced as a *bhogyā* - an object of enjoyment or suffering. On the other hand the world of names and forms is entirely dependent on Brahman, as it is falsely attributed to it. The world is the thing to be experienced (*bhogyā*). It changes every moment. The basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of



falsely attributed - superimposed - things (*adhyasta*) is distinct from the latter.

As told earlier, the veiling power (*āvaraṇa śakti*) - the cause of projecting power (*vikṣepa śakti*) - actually starts its operation after the Creation produced by the projecting power comes into being. The veiling power covers the mutual - reciprocal - distinction between the *dṛk* and *dṛśya* inside the gross body. In the external world also it covers the distinction between Brahman and the Creation. In other words this covering of the ignorance effects a mutual superimposition (*anyonya adhyāsa*) of *dṛk* (pure awareness/*sākṣī*) and *dṛśya* within the body at an individual level and externally between Brahman and the Creation.

A superimposition (*adhyāsa*) is mistaking a given thing for something entirely other than itself or attributing the features of one to the other. For such an error to take place, the ignorance of the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) on whom the superimposition occurs, is essential. Not knowing the rope as a rope in dim light, and mistaking it as a snake is an instance of superimposition. A crystal is colourless. Considering it to be blue in colour when placed in the vicinity of a blue cloth is superimposing the blue colour of the cloth on the colourless crystal. Problems born of superimposition (*adhyāsa*) can be remedied only by knowing the true nature of the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*).

In the present context the true "I" (*dṛk/sākṣī*) is identified with the embodiment. So the "I" is mistaken as the doer (*kartā*) and the experiencer (*bhoktā*) undergoing the suffering of *saṃsāra* - the cycle of mundane existence. Macrocosmically the world of names and forms is considered to be the part and parcel of Brahman. This leads to mistaking Brahman to be the experienced (*bhogyā*). At the

same time the permanent nature of Brahman is attributed to the Creation seeing it as permanent and ignoring its ever-transient feature. In short, mutual identification of true "I" with the embodiment at an individual level and of Brahman with the world at the totality level is the outcome of veiling power. This is how the veiling power (*āvaraṇa śakti*) of *māyā* becomes the cause of this dreaded *saṁsāra*. This is a fact which Vedānta declares and the discriminative persons discover.

### THE INDIVIDUAL *JĪVA* (*SAMŚĀRĪ*)

In the twelfth verse the identity of *saṁsāra*, with *liṅga śarīra* (subtle body) was mentioned. Thereafter *māyā* through its constituting powers was described in the last three verses. At the backdrop of *modi operandi* of both powers of *māyā*, the how of the subtle body (*liṅga*) becoming the *saṁsārī* called *jīva* - the individual - is shown in the next verse.

साक्षिणः पुरतो भातं लिङ्गं देहेन संयुतम् ।

चित्तिच्छायासमावेशज्जीवः स्याद् व्यावहारिकः । १६ ।।

*sākṣiṇaḥ purato bhātaṁ liṅgaṁ dehena saṁyutam*  
*citicchāyāsamāveśajjīvaḥ syād vyāvahārikaḥ - (16)*

चित्तिच्छायासमावेशात् - due to the unity with the reflected pure awareness साक्षिणः - of the self-evident cognitive principle (*sākṣi*) पुरतः - in the presence भातं - the one that exists लिङ्गं - the subtle body देहेन - with the physical body संयुतम् - identified with जीवः - the individual (*saṁsārī*) स्यात् - becomes (सः - that *jīva*) व्यावहारिकः - (is) the accomplisher of all the dealings. - (16)

16. The subtle body that exists in the presence of the self-evident cognitive principle (*sākṣī*), identified with the physical body becomes the individual (*saṃsārī*), due to the unity with the reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*). That individual - *jīva* - is the accomplisher of all the dealings (*S.R.U.* 54).

The subtle body (*liṅga*) and the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) are basically the thoughts (*antaḥkaraṇa vṛttis*) of the nature of cognitive power (*jñāna śakti*) or power of action (*kriyā śakti*). Both are thus one and the same. There is always an inborn unity between the reflected pure awareness (*citicchāyā/cidābhāsa*) and the subtle body (*liṅga*). During the waking state the interaction at physical body level is imperative to experience the results of past actions (*karmaphala*) capable of producing the waking state. This brings about an identification of the subtle body (*liṅga*) with the gross one. Both these bodies are inert and function in the presence of the all-pervasive self-cognitive principle (*sākṣī*). *Liṅga* (subtle body or *antaḥkaraṇa*) as an object of *sākṣī* (pure awareness) gains direct *cidābhāsa* (the reflected pure awareness) whereas the gross body gets it as an extension from the subtle body. As a result *liṅga* (subtle body) coupled with the physical body operates as a sentient entity capable of carrying out manifold functions. It is like a sophisticated machine designed for varied tasks, endowed with a power supply and an operator. The subtle body (*liṅga*) along with the physical body is the machine. The reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) is the non-stop power supply. *Ahaṅkāra* (ego), a part of *antaḥkaraṇa* (the inner instrument) or called subtle body (*liṅga*) is the operator. But there is a slight difference. In the case of machine, the operator is distinct from the machine and is independent of power supply. But *ahaṅkāra* is a part of the subtle body (*liṅga*) and depends on the reflected pure awareness for its operation.

Such a subtle body (*liṅga*) is called *jīva* - the individual - or *saṃsārī* who is subject to all the vagaries of *saṃsāra*. This takes place only after the effects of projecting and veiling powers have become manifest.

*Jīva*, the individual *saṃsārī*, is the accomplisher of all the dealings and experiences here and hereafter. The statuses of doer (*kartā*), experiencer (*bhoktā*), and knower (*pramātā*) belong exclusively to this individual (*jīva*). The performance of actions, earning their results, the travel to other fields of experiences (*lokas*) to gain the resultant embodiments, etc. are also individual (*jīva*) based. *Jīva* is not real (*satya*) for the following reasons:

- i) It is the product of inexplicable creative power (*māyā*) which is false. If the cause is false, the effect has to be false.
- ii) It ceases to exist forever in the abidance of knowledge of identity between true "I" and Brahman, called *mokṣa* - liberation. The individual (*jīva*) is not totally non-existent (*tuccham*) either, because it is the actual accomplisher of entire *saṃsāra* - the course of mundane existence - whose experience cannot be denied. Therefore *jīva* is called *vyāvahārikah* - the one who has empirical existence till self-knowledge is gained.

## THE HOW OF TRUE "I" (*ĀTMĀ*) APPEARING AS THE SUFFERER *JĪVA*

At this juncture, a doubt may arise as follows. *Jīva* - the empirical individual - is false even though it accomplishes *saṃsāra*. A false entity is neither eligible nor can aspire for self-knowledge or

liberation (*mokṣa*). The true "I" *sākṣī* (the self-evident cognitive principle/pure awareness) is always free from *saṃsāra* because it is free from *dṛśya* (the known). Therefore an occasion of *sākṣī* (pure awareness) gaining liberation is not possible. There is no one else who can aspire for liberation. This void of ownership leads to a state wherein Vedānta which speaks of liberation from *saṃsāra* becomes superfluous. The answer is, it is not the case. There is the one who actually experiences *saṃsāra* and so needs liberation.

अस्य जीवत्वमारोपात्साक्षिण्यवभासते ।

आवृतौ तु विनष्टायां भेदे भातेऽपयाति तत् ॥१७॥

*asya jīvatvamarōpāt sākṣiṇyavyabhāśate*  
*āvṛtau tu vinaṣṭāyāṃ bhedē bhāteḥ payāti tat - (17)*

अस्य - of this (empirical individual) जीवत्वम् - the status of being a *jīva* आरोपात् - due to superimposition साक्षिणि - in the true "I" (*ātmā*) अपि - even अवभासते - is experienced आवृतौ विनष्टायां - on the destruction of veiling तु - certainly भेदे भाते - when the distinction (of *dṛk* and *dṛśya*) is cognised तत् - it (superimposed status of being a *jīva*) अपयाति - disappears. - (17)

17. Due to superimposition the status of being a *jīva* pertaining to this empirical individual is experienced even in the true "I" (*ātmā*). It certainly disappears when the distinction (of *dṛk* and *dṛśya*) is cognised on the destruction of veiling (S.R.U. 55).

*Saṃsāra* is actually the production of false empirical individual - *jīva*. It is not possible for the ever-free true "I" (*ātmā/sākṣī*) to really have *saṃsāra* as its feature. Even then the veiling power of *māyā* plays the trick of covering the true nature of oneself and brings

about a mutual superimposition (*anyonyādhyāsa*) between the true "I" (*sākṣī*) and the embodiment with all its modifications. The nexus of reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) and the veiling power of *māyā* otherwise called self-ignorance effects this confusion. The superimposition generates a wrong notion that our embodiment, its limitations and sorrows are the inherent features of true "I" (*sākṣī*). The obvious outcome of such a mistake is to conclude the true "I" itself as the sufferer *jīva*. This is how the status of *jīva* or *saṃsāri* is experienced as if it is the nature of pure awareness (*sākṣī*) the true "I".

The situation is like the moon hidden behind the clouds that seems to be moving when the clouds move. Another example is that of your travelling in a train when it halts at an in between station. On the other side of the train away from the platform, on an adjacent parallel track another stationary train bound for opposite direction too is halting. While you are looking at it through the window, you find that your train is moving. But when you look at the platform side you realise that your train is still stationary. It was the other stationary one that had started moving in the opposite direction. The movement of other train was mistaken as that of your train. So does the status of *jīva* or *saṃsāra* appear to pertain to *sākṣī* (true "I"/*ātmā*) until one discovers *sākṣī* as totally free from it. The word *api* - even - in the first line of present verse suggests that *sākṣī* (*ātmā*) can never become *jīva* in reality.

### THE MEANS TO CORRECT THE ERROR OF TAKING TRUE "I" AS *JĪVA*

The veiling power of *māyā* expresses itself in a twofold way. Covering the knowledge of true "I" (*ātmā*), the veiling power renders *ātmā* as if non-existent. This results in the conclusion that the true

"I" (*ātmā*) free from the status of *jīva* (empirical individual) does not exist, because it is not known by our day to day experience or knowledge. Such effect of ignorance can be dispelled by relevant self-knowledge. The direct discovery that I am Brahman free from *saṃsāra* totally dispels the veiling power including its dreaded effect of mistaking oneself as *jīva*. The prefix *vi* in *vināṣṭāyām* shows that there is complete destruction of veiling power. This is done to highlight its non-return, in wake of self-knowledge.

Self-knowledge amply clears the distinction between *dṛśya* and *dṛk*. It shows that the accomplisher of *jīva* - the subtle body (*liṅga*) - is *dṛśya* (inert/the known) as pot, stone etc. whereas the true "I" the self-evident cognitive principle (*sākṣī*) is *dṛk* - free from all *dṛśya* (the known). Once this clarity based on the knowledge of true "I" (*ātmā*) is gained, the hitherto erroneous notion that *sākṣī* (*ātmā*) is *jīva* vanishes. The word *tu* is used as an emphatic particle to reveal the certainty of this fact based on the Vedas, reasoning and the direct discovery of *jñānīs* - the persons having self-knowledge.

Vedānta helps to get rid of the wrong notion of having the status of *jīva* or *saṃsārī* falsely superimposed on true "I" (*sākṣī*) by eliminating the veiling power of *māyā* through self-knowledge. Vedānta is not superfluous. It has a unique role in obtaining the freedom from *saṃsāra*.

## THE HOW OF APPARENTLY CHANGING OF BRAHMAN

As the miseries of *jīva* are experienced in the true "I" (*sākṣī*) by superimposition born of veiling power, in the same way the Creation appears as if an integral part and parcel of Brahman due to mutual superimposition.

तथा सर्गब्रह्मणोश्च भेदमावृत्य तिष्ठति ।

या शक्तिस्तद्वशाद्ब्रह्म विकृतत्वेन भासते ॥१८॥

*tathā sargabrahmaṇośca bhedamāvṛtya tiṣṭhati*

*yā śaktistadvaśād brahma vikṛtatvena bhāsate - (18)*

तथा - in that manner सर्गब्रह्मणोः - of Brahman and the Creation  
भेदम् - distinction आवृत्य - having covered या - who शक्तिः - veiling  
power तिष्ठति - remains/exists तद्वशात् - under its influence ब्रह्म -  
Brahman विकृतत्वेन - as modifying in nature भासते - appears. - (18)

18. In that manner, under the influence of veiling power that remains having covered the distinction of Brahman and the Creation, Brahman appears as modifying in nature.

The veiling power covers outside in the world the distinction of Brahman and the Creation, in the same manner as that of *dr̥k* (self-cognitive principle, pure awareness) and *dr̥śya* (the known) within the body. Brahman is always free from six modifications (*ṣaḍ-vikāra*) in contrast to the ever-changing Creation. But the veiling power effects a mutual superimposition of Brahman and the Creation. Thereby their distinction gets covered as mentioned earlier in the context of verse fifteen. This gives the wrong notion that Brahman is subject to six modifications with the Creation as its inherent feature.

## THE MEANS TO DISPEL WRONG NOTION ABOUT BRAHMAN

As was the case within the body, in the external world also the elimination of veiling power by the knowledge, "I am Brahman", reveals the distinction of Brahman and the Creation. Thereafter



there is no occasion to mistake the falsely superimposed Creation as the characteristic feature of Brahman. So the author now tells:

अत्राप्यावृत्तिनाशेन विभाति ब्रह्मसर्गयोः ।

भेदस्तयोर्विकारस्स्यात्सर्गे न ब्रह्मणि क्वचित् ॥१९॥

*atrāpyāvṛtināśena vibhāti brahmasargayoḥ*

*bhedastayorvikārassyāt sarge na brahmaṇi kvacit - (19)*

अत्र - here (i.e. externally) अपि - also आवृत्तिनाशेन - by the destruction of veiling ब्रह्मसर्गयोः - of Brahman and the Creation भेदः - distinction विभाति - becomes clear तयोः - among the two सर्गे - in the Creation विकारः - modification स्यात् - is fit to exist ब्रह्मणि - in Brahman न क्वचित् - nowhere. - (19)

19. Externally also the distinction of Brahman and the Creation becomes clear by the destruction of veiling. Among the two, the modification is fit to exist in the Creation, (but) nowhere in Brahman (S.R.U. 57).

The mutual superimposition (*adhyāsa*) of Brahman and the Creation on each other is on account of the covering effected by the veiling power of *māyā*. The superimposition will not cease unless their distinction is clearly appreciated. A clear cognition of Brahman free from the false Creation attributed to it can reveal the distinction between the two. The continuance of ultimate cognitive principle (*dr̥k*), pure awareness, and the discontinuance of all inert things (*dr̥śya* /the known) enable us to ascertain true "I" within the body and Brahman with reference to the external world. Thereafter the statements of *Upaniṣads* like "*Tat tvam asi*" (You are that Brahman) can reveal the identity of both of them. . Only the finale of such firm

knowledge expressed by the dictum, "I am Brahman of the nature *sat, cit, ānanda*." comprising the appreciation of attributeless all-pervasive pure awareness (*cit*) destroys the veiling power of *māyā* with all its residual traces. Then only, the distinction between Brahman and the Creation becomes as clear as that of any two objects like a clock and cloth.

After the appreciation of their vivid distinction only it becomes directly evident that at no time and nowhere the modifications are truly possible in Brahman. Even the words "no time" and "nowhere" have no reference/relation to Brahman. Brahman has no link with time and space - a part of the Creation. And yet, we have to use the language from the relative world of time and space to convey the absolute Brahman. All modifications can legitimately belong only to the Creation.

Thus it is the Creative power - *māyā* - that is at the root of this calamitous *saṃsāra* - the flux of our mundane existence. The projecting and veiling powers of *māyā* present the appearance of an impossible scene and make us believe the unbelievable. The entire Creation and our *saṃsāra* is nothing but a big will-o'-the-wisp (delusive design and hope). To know the reality, the sooner we end the veiling power the better for all.

## THE WORLD MINUS THE NAMES AND FORMS IS BRAHMAN

In the preceding topic the veiling power (*āvaraṇa śakti*) of *māyā* (the Creative power) was shown as the root cause of *saṃsāra*. Microcosmically it brings about a mutual identification between the true "I" and one's embodiment. Macrocosmically a similar identification is effected between Brahman and the Creation. As a result the true "I" (*sākṣī* - pure awareness) at an individual level falsely appears as a miserable creature - *saṃsārī* - endowed with the statuses of experiencer (*bhoktā*) of joys and sorrow, doer (*kartā*) of all the deeds, and a constant victim of birth, death and other changes. On the other hand, at the external world level Brahman is mistaken to be the ever changing world with the status of an experienceable thing (*bhogyatva*).

All these false but dangerous effects are totally rooted out on the elimination of veiling power. This feat can be achieved only by gaining the knowledge of Brahman. That itself is self-knowledge wherein the identity of true "I" and Brahman is discovered. Thus the remedy against *saṃsāra* is totally the knowledge of Brahman, the true "I". The questions "What exactly is the nature of Brahman?", and "How can we ascertain Brahman with the means accessible to us?", naturally seize the mind of a serious seeker. For this, one of the most direct and yet simple modes of inquiry is employed by Vedānta. It begins with the inquiry of the nature of the world around us and finally reveals Brahman as the very basis of the whole Creation. During this search, the nature of true "I" also

gets revealed. The method adopted has a pointed suggestion which is highly helpful in the pursuit of contemplation of Brahman, the ultimate truth.

## THE FIVE FACETS OF ALL OUR DEALINGS

अस्ति भाति प्रियं रूपं नाम चेत्यंशपञ्चकम् ।  
आद्यत्रयं ब्रह्मरूपं जगद्रूपं ततो द्वयम् ॥२०॥

*asti bhāti priyaṃ rūpaṃ nāma cetyaṃśapañcakam  
ādyatrayaṃ brahmarūpaṃ jagadrūpaṃ tato dvayam - (20)*

अस्ति - exists भाति - shines (cognizably) or appears प्रियम् - pleasing रूपं - form नाम - name च - and इति - so अंशपञ्चकम् - (is) the group of five constituents आद्यत्रयं - the first triad ब्रह्मरूपं - (is) the nature of Brahman ततः - the other than that द्वयं - pair जगद्रूपं - (is) the nature of world. - (20)

20. The group of five constituents, "Exists, shines (cognizably), pleasing, form and name" pertains to all dealings (*vyavahāra*) in the world. The triad of first three is the nature of Brahman and the pair of remaining two is that of world (*S.R.U.* 58).

All our dealings or conducts (*vyavahāra*) in life with anything from the world invariably have the five facets enumerated in this verse. No pursuit is possible without this pentad. An assessment of the role of each one of them will establish the truth of this statement. It will also pave the way for our ascertaining the nature of both Brahman and the Creation - world.

## ASTI - EXISTS

All our contacts and pursuits are with the existing things whether tangible or intangible. No one interacts with non-existing objects or beings. For that matter even the seeming action of lunatics or persons like Don Quixote are with reference to their imageries considered by them as real. So the thing we transact with, exists (*asti/is*). Our expression "A given thing is" also displays this fact. Existence (*sat*) aspect of everything in the Creation is clearly cognised.

## BHĀTI - SHINES (COGNIZABLY)

The existence of a thing necessarily presupposes its cognition by a knower, the subject. Only after knowing can a thing be said as "exists/is". That is how we say a given thing shines cognizably (*bhāti*) or is known. Inert or non-cognitive things can neither know themselves nor can they ascertain the existence of something else and interact with it on their own. The cognitive/knowledge principle in the subject, the knower, is the all-pervasive pure awareness (*cit*). Yet the cognitive aspect operates effectively only through the reflected pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) in the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*). It is like light which though present everywhere in a given region, is visible only when reflected from a surface, and not directly. The existence of a given thing indicates the presence of cognitive principle (*cit*/pure awareness) even if the knowledge principle (*cit*) is not objectified directly.

## PRIYAM - PLEASING

The word *priyam* means pleasing, a locus of love or pleasure. With "pleasure" as its meaning *priyam* also suggests happiness

(*ānanda*) by implication.

In our interactions (*vyavahāra*) in life we confront objects, beings and events which give us either joy or sorrow. The former are desirable and the latter ones, the undesirable. The universal concept is to treat the objects, beings or events as the sources of sense pleasure and sorrow. But it is not so. If it were so, the same thing must impart either joy or sorrow to all persons at all periods of time. Our observation in the world shows it to be otherwise. The same thing can be joyous at one time and sorrowful at other even for the same person.

The desirability or undesirability of things is determined on the basis of a universal norm operating in our life - seeking happiness without sorrow. This is only found in the true "I" (*ātmā*), the locus of limitless love, because that is the only absolute happiness principle. That makes "I" an ever pleasing one. Those things which help to experience this happiness in a varying degree are desired by us. In fact all the things like sense objects are dear not for the sake of the objects themselves, but for one's own sake they all are dear (*Bṛ.U.* 2-4-5 and 4-5-6). The other things which suppress the happiness ("I" the absolute happiness) and make us suffer the sorrow are not at all desired. In both cases the point of reference to determine either of them is the absolute happiness, the true "I". Every one has an inkling of this in the deep sleep but it is usually not investigated. Experiences of joys and sorrows surface this way. Unfortunately almost all are ignorant of this basic fact. Whether a specific thing gives joy or not, the locus of love (*priyam*), the pleasing "I" is always present as the determining factor. Going into the details of the how of joyous and sorrowful experiences and figuring out from where they originate will facilitate a clear understanding about our likes,

dislikes and our values about objects, events and beings.

The true "I" (*ātmā*/pure awareness) is all-pervasive Brahman. Its nature is *sat-cit-ānanda*. The Creation is falsely superimposed on it. The existence (*sat*) aspect of Brahman is readily cognised in all the things in the world. The knowledge/cognitive (*cit*) feature of it is appreciated only wherever the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) is present. That is how we get the division of sentient and insentient things although Brahman (pure awareness) is all-pervasive. However in our daily routine chores the happiness (*ānanda*) facet of Brahman comes to surface only through the three subtle *vṛttis* (thoughts) called *priya* (agreeable), *moda* (joy) and *pramoda* (intense joy). All the three are different from the gross thoughts (*vṛttis*) of the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*).

The happiness aspect of Brahman is hidden from our perception by the veiling brought about by *tamas* - ignorance and the consequent agitations. An individual in presence of the desired sense objects interacts with them at the mental level. Such an operation renders asunder *tamas* veiling the happiness - nature of Brahman - whereby there surface the subtle *vṛttis* of *priya*, *moda* or *pramoda* depending on the type of contact and mental interaction involved. Those subtle *vṛttis* elicit the happiness in varying degrees. In worldly parlance this is called sense pleasure. The sense objects have a role, no doubt in bringing out the experience of joy but the source of this happiness is Brahman and not the sense objects. The contacts with the objects are temporary, so is the sense pleasure born out of them short-lived. The same process is prevalent in the experience of joys in dream. The only difference is that there are no physical sense objects. *Priya*, *moda* and *pramoda vṛttis* also manifest in the absence of automatically/actively functioning *ahaṅkāra vṛtti* of *antaḥkaraṇa* as is the case in

sleep. This explains why there is an experience of happiness in sleep even though senses and their objects are not operating.

Let us understand *priya*, *moda* and *pramoda vṛttis*, subtle in nature. Suppose a close friend of yours whom you had not met for the last fifteen years calls you saying, he will visit you shortly for two days while in transit. You are delighted with this news. This joy of heralding is by *priya* (agreeable) *vṛtti*. When you meet your friend at the airport the joy you get of actual meeting is through *moda* (joy) *vṛtti*. At home when both of you revel in the memories of your sports, adventures, jokes and mischiefs of college days, you derive intense joy of reliving the past. This is conveyed by *pramoda vṛtti*. In all the three cases the actual source of happiness is the "I", Brahman only. Your friend is just a favourable means, but not happiness himself. If the same friend were to visit you after fifteen years, let us say in your bereavement, he will not evoke similar response of happiness. In this instance the thoughts of sorrow are so predominant that they do not allow the *vṛttis* like *priya* to surface.

The causes of sorrows may differ, but they are finally experienced through their connected thoughts (*vṛttis*) in the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*). In the absence of such thoughts, there is no sorrow even if its cause is really present. When totally engrossed in some preoccupation, you do not feel the pain in some part of your body. No one suffers one's ailments in sleep. The thoughts depicting the sorrows are absent in both the above cases in spite of the causes being present. The true "I" (*ātmā*/pure awareness) is free from all the thoughts. So the sorrow is totally alien to pure awareness (*ātmā*) whose nature is absolute happiness. In and through the sorrowful experiences the pure awareness (true "I"/*ātmā*) who illumines them is always present in



its nature, the happiness. The governing factor in not experiencing this happiness is the non-availability of favourable conditions as detailed earlier. The foregoing analysis proves the presence of latent happiness - and so *priyam* - even while encountering all sorrows. The first line of this verse does not tell that all things do produce happiness. It only points out the presence of *priyam* (pleasing or *ānanda*) factor in relation to everything whether joyous or not. Existence (*sat*) in *asti* and the cognitive principle (*cit*) in *bhāti* are also not produced by the objects, events or beings. In fact, all of them exist in *sat* which itself is *cit* and *ānanda*.

*Sureśvarācārya*, the author of *magnum opus* called *Vārtika* - poetic exposition - on the *Upaniṣads*, at one place shows sorrows as the features of *antaḥkaraṇa* (inner instrument) and not of *ātmā* (the true "I").

दुःखी यदि भवेदात्मा कस्साक्षी दुःखिनो भवेत् ।  
दुःखिनः साक्षिताऽयुक्ता साक्षिणो दुःखिता तथा ॥

"If *ātmā* (pure awareness) were to be a sufferer (i.e. the known/a changing phenomenon), who could be the illuminator (as cognitive principle)? A sufferer cannot be an illuminator (of one's suffering); in the same way, the illuminator (i.e. pure awareness/*sākṣī*) cannot have the status of a sufferer" (*Nai.Si.* 2-76).

नर्ते स्याद्विक्रियां दुःखी साक्षिता का विकारिणः ।  
धीविक्रियासहस्राणां साक्ष्यतोऽहमविक्रियः ॥

"Without change (of *antaḥkaraṇa*), there can be no sufferer. How can that which changes be the illuminator (*sākṣī*)? Therefore the true "I" (*ātmā*) is the changeless illuminator (*sākṣī*) of the thousands of modifications of the *antaḥkaraṇa* - inner instrument" (*Nai.Si.* 2-77).

Discoveries in neuroscience can also help us to understand better the mode involved in the production of sorrows. According to neuroscience, the emotional responses like sorrow, fear, despair, elation etc. get processed in the parts of brain called limbic system comprising temporal lobe, hypothalamus, the oldest brain and the recently evolved neocerebrum. The electric impulses received in the cortex from senses give us the perceptions whereas their resultant emotions do occur in the said parts of brain through specific patterns created as the neurons fire off minute electric impulses. When they do not function as in sleep or in the event of damage to any of these parts, the emotional responses cease even in the presence of external causes. This shows that things like sorrows and fear occur at our embodiment level. The cognitive principle, the true "I" (*ātmā*) simply illumines them - makes them known. The illuminator (*sākṣī*) is the basis of all cognitions but it is totally free from all that is cognised including sorrows. The nature of illuminator (*sākṣī/ātmā*) is absolute happiness. In other words, in every experience of sorrow too, the true "I" or happiness, also called *priyam* is invariably present.

### *RŪPAM* - FORM

The fourth aspect is *rūpam* - form. The word "form" has to be taken in a wider sense. It means the nature of a thing as distinct from all the rest and the one that distinguishes the thing. *Rūpam* (form) as used in this verse is not restricted only to the forms seen by eyes. For example sound, touch, taste and smell have their own forms by which they are known to be so. Even in a given variety say the sound, there are many forms like being melodious, harsh, shrieking, loud, whispering and so on. The nature of a thought whether loving or painful or any other also has its form.

## NĀMA - NAME

The fifth and the last facet that we encounter in all our dealings in the world is *nāma* - name. "Name" is the word or a label as it were, associated to each and everything in the Creation. All the things and beings are known, spoken of, and are referred to or dealt with by their corresponding names. The interaction in the world would be almost impossible without the names.

These are the five aspects invariably present in all our pursuits related to the world, without which our dealings (*vyavahāra*) with objects, beings and events are not possible. We can summarise that everything in the Creation presents itself through these five facets.

The first line of this verse can also mean that only these five aspects, "Exists, shines (cognizably), pleasing, form; and name" are available to us for interaction with the objects, events and beings in the world. In this case, sorrows get included in the category of "form" as associated with specific types of thoughts. That means sorrows are the features of only names and forms.

## PRECISE NATURE OF BRAHMAN

Of the five aspects mentioned above, the first three reveal the exact nature of Brahman, the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) or the ultimate truth of this world. The triad of *asti* (exists), *bhāti* (shines cognizably) and *priyam* (pleasing) stand for *sat* (the ever-existence principle), *cit* (the self-evident knowledge principle/pure awareness) and *ānanda* (the absolute happiness). Different things do differ in their names and forms, but the *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* aspects are common to all. *Sat* as told here is not the relative existence of a thing which

gets destroyed. It refers to the absolute existence, which is never subject to any change or destruction. This *sat* only makes the relative existence of different things in the Creation possible. Pure awareness, alone, can be such an ever-existing principle .

*Sat, cit* and *ānanda* are not three qualities of some substance called Brahman. The one that always exists without birth, destruction and any change is called *sat*. If *sat* were inert (*dṛṣya*), some other knowledge/cognitive principle will be required to know it. Existence of some knowledge principle distinct from *sat*, imposes a limitation on it, leading to its destruction. Any limited thing is bound to perish. Such an ephemeral thing cannot be the self-existent indestructible *sat*. Therefore the knowledge or cognitive principle *cit* must necessarily be the same as *sat*. So is the case with *ānanda* (happiness). It also has to be identical with *sat*, that is *cit*. We have also seen that the origin of happiness can only be traced to pure awareness, the true "I" (ultimate cognitive principle/*sākṣī*). Thus non-dual Brahman is *sat, cit, ānanda* and these are not three different qualities of Brahman. The *Upaniṣads* are never tired of repeating this truth. This fact can provide us a means to cognise Brahman in and through the perceived world. The actual method for this appreciation will be detailed later.

## PRECISE NATURE OF JAGAT - THE WORLD

After stating the first three facets of the pentad as standing for Brahman, there remains the pair of last two comprising *nāma* (name) and *rūpa* (form) superimposed (*adhyasta*) on Brahman. These two exclusively constitute the world or the Creation called *jagat*. The features of the Creation (*jagat*) made of *nāma* and *rūpa* are in total contrast to what Brahman is. Birth, change, destruction, limitation, sorrow, inertness, dependence, falseness and duality

characterise *nāma* and *rūpa*, whereas Brahman is birthless, changeless, indestructible, limitless, absolute happiness, self-evident knowledge principle, self-existent, the ultimate truth and non-dual.

The people who lack discrimination (*viveka*) mix up the five facets by superimposing the triad of *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda* on the pair of name (*nāma*) and form (*rūpa*) and vice versa. This leads to the wrong conclusion that the cognised world is real and Brahman is transient.

Some may question the veracity of distinguishing the triad of *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda* from the name and form because the triad itself comprises names and forms. Yes, superficially it appears so, but not in reality. In the world, existence, knowledge and happiness are seen but in parts whereas Brahman is absolute -- independent, self-existent and limitless -- in this respect. Consider a glass jar. We say "The jar is". If it is broken "The jar is not". Though the jar does not exist now, the existence aspect of it free from the name and form of the jar continues, because the glass pieces do exist. Even when the glass pieces are crushed into powder, the silica exists. Like this the earlier names and forms may be lost, but the existence aspect continues. There is existence in the non-existence of a thing too, in the sense that absence of a thing is and it is cognised. Whether a thing exists or not, *sat* always is. This outlines the distinction between relative existence called name or form and the absolute existence called *sat*. Similar distinctions hold good with regard to *cit* and *ānanda*.

In fact, the words *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda* individually belong to the created world only, and so, they have the limitations of language. As experienced in the world, existence (*sat*) could be

inert, knowledge (*cit*) begins and *ānanda* becomes meaningful only as a foil to sorrow. The word "Brahman" literally means "big". Bigness can be only with reference to something small. Such a situation is possible only in the Creation. In Brahman there is nothing big or small. All words are confined to the relative world. They can operate in the realms of species (*jāti*), attribute (*guṇa*), action (*kriyā*) and relation (*sambandha*). Brahman is free from all these. In fact, strictly speaking no word or words can define Brahman. And yet to indicate Brahman, these impotent words are employed by adopting some specific usages. For example, the words *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda* or *satyam*, *jñānam*, *anantam* (*Tai.U.* 2-1) are juxtaposed (used in *sāmānādhikaranyam*) with one another. This enables them to eliminate the limitations of each word and to thus indicate Brahman though indirectly.

The analysis of the pentad in relation to the perceived world is also known as *Brahma-sarga-viveka* - the ascertainment of Brahman and the Creation. This method in principle, is similar to *dr̥k-dr̥śya-viveka*, discussed earlier, although the focuses differ. *Dr̥k-dr̥śya-viveka* - ascertainment of the cogniser (*dr̥k*) and the cognised (*dr̥śya*) - is carried out at the level of an individual whereas *Brahma-sarga-viveka* is related to the whole Creation. *Dr̥k* - pure awareness (*sākṣī*) - is itself *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda*. At an individual level, in contrast, *dr̥śya* (cognised) is nothing but some name (*nāma*) and form (*rūpa*), comprising the world.

#### EXPLANATION OF FIVE FACETS: *SAT*, *CIT*, *ĀNANDA*, NAME, FORM

The five facets are further elaborated upon by showing the continuance (*anvaya*) of *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda* and discontinuance

(*vyatireka*) of name (*nāma*) and form (*rūpa*) in all the things in the Creation.

खवाय्वग्निजलोर्वीषु देवतिर्यङ्नरादिषु ।

अभिन्नाः सच्चिदानन्दा भिद्येते रूपनामनी ॥ २१ ॥

*khavāyvagñijalorvīṣu devatiryañ narādiṣu*

*abhinnāḥ saccidānandā bhidyete rūpanāmānī - (21)*

खवाय्वग्निजलोर्वीषु - in the space, air, fire, water and the earth  
देवतिर्यङ्नरादिषु - in the celestial beings, animals, humans etc.  
सच्चिदानन्दाः - the facets of existence (*sat*), knowledge principle (*cit*)  
and happiness (*ānanda*) अभिन्नाः - (are) the same रूपनामनी - form  
and name भिद्येते - differ. - (21)

21. The existence (*sat*), knowledge principle (*cit*) and happiness (*ānanda*) facets are the same in the space, air, fire, water and the earth as well as in the celestial beings, animals, humans etc. (whereas their) names and forms differ.

The five elements and different species of embodiments are mentioned to encompass the entire Creation - animate or inanimate. In all of them the *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda* facets are identical. Take for instance an apple and a rose. The apple exists and the rose also exists. Both of them shine (cognizably). The apple is pleasing and so is the rose. One and the same *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda* inheres in both.

The remaining two aspects - name and form - differ in all the five elements and whatever that is produced from them. In the example that we had considered earlier, the name "apple" and its

form - the nature i.e. the appleness - are distinct from rest of the things. They differ from those of rose. There is no exception to this separateness. Some may doubt that different members of the same species have identical names and forms. It does appear to be so. But when probed, a subtle distinction can be found on account of different origin, texture and abidance in different time and place. These additional features qualify the distinction amidst apparent similar names and forms.

The inquiry as employed in these two verses directly determines the exact nature of Brahman. The same inquiry also reveals the nature of true "I" at the individual level. Technically this is an ascertainment of the two words *tat* ("that" referring to Brahman) and *tvam* ("you" the individual *ĵīva* in your true nature) from the statement of *Chāndogyopaniṣad*, "*Tat tvam asi*" - You are Brahman. How this inquiry and its results help us to get absorbed in the appreciation of our true nature, identical with Brahman, will be the topic of the forthcoming section.



# VEDĀNTIC WAYS TO SAMĀDHI

## CONTEMPLATION (*NIDIDHYĀSANAM*)

The nature of Brahman and true "I" was shown in the preceding portion, establishing thereby their identity. In general, the knowledge of a given thing eliminates the ignorance of it then and there, revealing the real thing to be known. While, in principle, this fact is also true for self-knowledge, there is some practical difficulty. Self-knowledge has also to be well endowed with appropriate means for its birth to take place and then for attaining its maturity (*B.G.* 13-51 to 53). It should also be free from the obstructions that hamper its beginning or its path to maturity. Laxity of purpose or the presence of obstructions denies the persistent appreciation of true "I" (*ātmā*) despite the advent of knowledge. The ingrained habit of identifying with one's own embodiment (*viparītabhāvanā*) persists. This problem has to be overcome by repeated contemplation - *nididhyāsanam* - centered on one's true nature. It comprises maintaining a steady flow of similar thoughts that make one appreciate *ātmā*/Brahman to the exclusion of all other thoughts pertaining to not-self (*anātmā*) like body, sense objects etc. As a result the mind gets absorbed in *ātmā*, identical with Brahman. *Nididhyāsanam* (contemplation) steadies self-knowledge, thus promoting a persistent appreciation of one's true self. The means to effective contemplation are elaborated in the next eight verses.

## THE LADDER OF SPIRITUAL PURSUIT - 13 ESSENTIAL STEPS

Before proceeding with contemplation, a retrospective glance at the steps preceding it and their results will help the seeker a lot

to make up for the shortcomings in one's endeavour. A brief account of these in the work of Sureśvaracarya written in some other context will help to get a bird's-eye view of the entire pursuit. The following thirteen steps in a sequential crescendo order are listed by him in pursuing the final goal of human life (*Nai.Si.*, Introduction to 1-52).

i) नित्यकर्मानुष्ठानात् धर्मोत्पत्तिः -

"*Punya* - merit (results of good deeds as entitling to a future reward) - is produced from the performance of daily and occasional obligatory duties".

In the entire Creation, interdependence prevails. A natural give and take rule governs all the strata of the phenomenal world. As individuals we depend much on many phenomenal powers. A life without air, water, earth, sun, moon, rain, flora, fauna and similar other forces is just not possible. In return to these indispensable services that we receive from the cosmos, the humans also have to contribute their mite.

This is accomplished by discharging one's own duties according to *dharma* - the prescribed code of conduct in the scriptures - in dedication to *Īśvara* (the Creator). Performing one's duties has to be accorded priority instead of being preoccupied with the results. Of course, the results on their own stand guaranteed. Such an attitude of detached actions is called *karma-yoga* (*B.G.* 2-47; 3-30). This approach maintains harmony in the cosmic wheel of action. The one who does not contribute his or her due is considered a thief misappropriating what the person deserves not. On the other hand a person who repays the obligation by discharging one's duties acquires *punya* - merit.

ii) धर्मोत्पत्तेः पापहानिः -

"The sins - the results of adverse past actions - become ineffective on account of *puṇya* - merit - born as specified earlier."

The results of past bad actions agitate the mind and impede the higher pursuit in life. *Puṇya* (merit) nullifies their adverse effects.

iii) ततः चित्तशुद्धिः -

"Thereupon the mind (*antaḥkaraṇa*) gets purified."

The purity of mind is seen as its composure and its capability to use the faculty of discrimination (*viveka*).

iv) ततः संसारयाथात्म्यावबोधः -

"Consequently the actual nature of the mundane existence is understood."

The actual nature of worldly existence (*saṃsāra*) refers to the resultant sorrows involved therein, the impermanent nature of objects, beings and events, and the erroneous notions of pleasure and displeasure superimposed (*śobhanā/ aśobhanādhyāsa*) on the world.

v) ततो वैराग्यम् -

"From that (is born) dispassion."

The assessment of the world in the right perspective loosens the firm stranglehold that the sense objects have on humans.

This is the outcome of proper discrimination (*viveka*).

vi) ततो मुमुक्षुत्वम् -

"Thereupon (dawns) intense longing for liberation - freedom from the existence of limitations, sorrows etc."

vii) ततः तदुपायपर्येषणम् -

"Afterwards (starts) the search for the means of liberation."

viii) ततः सर्वकर्मतत्साधनसंन्यासः -

"Then, renunciation of all actions along with their means."

The person who has accomplished what is indicated in the first seven steps grows out of the necessity of carrying out actions. He or she needs more leisure to take to the further pursuit. Scripture exempts such a person as an exceptional case, from the preoccupations of discharging duties. This withdrawal from actions is not out of laziness or inadvertency. It is a lifestyle sanctioned by the Vedas only to highly mature and ready seekers (*sādhakas*) to dedicate full time to the pursuit of accomplishing the final goal of life.

ix) ततो योगाभ्यासः -

"Thereupon (taking to) the repeated practice (*abhyāsa*) of *yoga*, i.e. self-inquiry (*śravaṇam*), reflection on it (*mananam*) and contemplation (*nididhyāsanam*)."

The word *yoga* primarily means self-knowledge or the knowledge of the ultimate truth (*paramārtha-jñāna*). In the present

context as the final goal of knowledge is yet to be attained, the word *yoga* refers to the means of gaining the ultimate knowledge.

First, the inquiry (*śravaṇam*) as per the scriptures, with the help of competent teacher has to be conducted to ascertain the truth. Thereby ignorance is dispelled. Then the reflection (*mananam*) is to be done on *śravaṇam* and whatever doubts arise are to be removed based on reasoning in accordance with scriptures. Afterwards one has to resort to continuous contemplation (*nididhyāsanam*) to overcome the contrary habitual notions. Self-knowledge and the clarity thereof are possible only when they are not obstructed by ignorance, doubts or erroneous contrary notions regarding the true "I" (*tvam*) and Brahman (*taṭ*). The direct appreciation (*darśana*) of true "I" (*ātmā*)/Brahman is possible only by employing these three means together. Ādi Śaṅkarācārya in his commentary on *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* emphasises the need for collective and sustained practice of these means in the following words:

यदा एकत्वम् एतानि (श्रवणमनननिदिध्यासनसाधनानि) उपगतानि तदा सम्यग्दर्शनं ब्रह्मैकत्वविषयं प्रसीदति नान्यथा श्रवणमात्रेण ।

"The thorough knowledge of (one's own) identity with Brahman is clear or bears fruit (*prasīdati*) when these (i.e. the means of *śravaṇam*, *mananam* and *nididhyāsanam*) are united - combined - and not otherwise by only self-inquiry/ *śravaṇam*" (*Br.U.Bhāṣya*, 2-4-5).

x) ततः चित्तस्य प्रत्यक्प्रवणता -

"Consequently (there occurs) the effortless abidance of

the mind in the true nature of oneself."

xi) ततः तत्त्वमस्यादिवाक्यार्थपरिज्ञानम् -

"Thereupon (is produced) the clear knowledge of aphoristic statements like *tat tvam asi* - You are that Brahman."

xii) ततः अविद्योच्छेदः -

"Then self-ignorance (is) destroyed."

The birth of clear self-knowledge and the ending of self-ignorance are identical with no time gap between them. Yet a sequential order is mentioned to show the two practical aspects involved therein. In knowledge, there is the attainment of the already accomplished, viz. *ātmā* - the true "I" (*prāptaprāpti*). In the case of destruction of self-ignorance, there is the termination of *saṃsāra* which in reality did never exist (*parihṛtaparihāraḥ*). To put it differently, both the statements are like stating, "Light came and darkness went away", despite the simultaneity of both the events.

xiii) ततश्च स्वात्मनि एव अवस्थानम् -

"Consequently (there is) firm abidance in one's own true nature, *ātmā/Brahman*."

At this stage the mind (i.e. *antaḥkaraṇa*) gets unswervingly absorbed in the true nature of oneself. Thereafter the person does not lose sight of *ātmā/Brahman* even during one's interaction with the world. This is the state of *jīvanmukti* - liberation while living.

## WHAT IS SAMĀDHI?

In Vedānta, the totally absorbed state of our *antaḥkaraṇa* (inner instrument) in the knowledge of Brahman to the exclusion of all *dṛśya* - the known - is called *samādhī*. It is neither the state of dream nor that of sleep. Yet in this state, unlike as in the waking state, there is no awareness of any object of the Creation, including one's body.

*Samādhī*, as per Vedānta, calls for contemplation (*nīdīdhyāsanam*) of *ātmā*/Brahman, for a sufficiently long period of time. A regular, repeated practice of *nīdīdhyāsanam* gathers a momentum whereby the mind gets effortlessly absorbed in the appreciation of Brahman. Culmination of *nīdīdhyāsanam* is *samādhī*.

Ādī Śaṅkarācārya defines *samādhī* as follows:

... ब्रह्मैवाहमस्मीत्यभेदेनावस्थानं समाधिः । (पञ्चीकरणम्)

"*Samādhī* is the state of undivided abidance in the appreciation of identity that I am nothing but Brahman."

## FIVE MINUS TWO IS EQUAL TO ONE = A VEDĀNTIC EQUATION

How are we to proceed with contemplation based on the inquiry conducted so far and the consequent ascertainment? Verses 20 and 21 give us the clue. Consider the world as perceived with the five facets involved therein. The first three facets - exists (*asti*), shines cognizably (*bhāti*) and pleasing (*priyam*) as *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda* - refer to Brahman. The name (*nāma*) and form (*rūpa*) belong

exclusively to the world. So withdraw your attention from the falsely superimposed name and form by focussing the mind on *sat, cit, ānanda*. What remains is only the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) Brahman as *sat, cit, ānanda*. They are not three different qualities, but integrally define the nature of non-dual Brahman. Thus we get an equation as it were, i.e. five minus two is equal to one.

## TWO LOCI FOR SAMĀDHI

The means to contemplation (*nididhyāsanam*) leading to *samādhi* is first introduced in the following verse.

उपेक्ष्य नामरूपे द्वे सच्चिदानन्द तत्परः ।  
समाधिं सर्वदा कुर्याद्भुदये वाऽथवा बहिः ॥२२॥

*upekṣya nāmarūpe dve saccidānanda tatparaḥ*  
*samādhim sarvadā kuryād hṛdaye vāthavā bahiḥ* - (22)

नामरूपे द्वे - both name and form उपेक्ष्य - having disregarded  
सच्चिदानन्दतत्परः (भूत्वा) - (being) engrossed in *sat, cit, ānanda* हृदये  
वा - either in the heart/*antaḥkaraṇa* अथवा - or बहिः - outside  
सर्वदा - always समाधिं कुर्यात् - one must make the mind absorbed  
(i.e. practise *samādhi*). - (22)

22. Having disregarded both name and form, the seeker engrossed in *sat, cit, ānanda*, must always make the mind absorbed in it (i.e. practise *samādhi*) either within the heart (*antaḥkaraṇa*) or without (*S.R.U.* 59).

This verse has an alternate reading as *saccidānandavastuni* in the truth that is *sat, cit, ānanda* - instead of



*saccidānandatatparaḥ*. However, it does not change its meaning radically.

Depending on the lack of preparedness, the mind has a habitual tendency of getting preoccupied with the world of names and forms or to identify with one's embodiment even after gaining self-knowledge. After taking recourse to the ascertained basis of either the individual or the world, the contemplator has to withdraw one's attention from names and forms. *Upekṣya* means "having disregard or being indifferent". By discarding the mental preoccupation with the world, including one's own embodiment, one's total attention is directed towards its basis, viz. *sat cit ānanda*. The aim is to get the mind fully engrossed in the appreciation of *ātmā* identical with Brahman whose nature is *sat cit ānanda*. This attempt at making the mind absorbed in the appreciation of Brahman is called the practice of *samādhi*. Withdrawal of the senses from their respective sense objects is indispensable as preparatory to *samādhi*. Figuratively, it is like obtaining a grain of rice from paddy by eliminating all its chaff.

Two loci are recommended for directing the practice of *samādhi* to overcome the habitual errors at two different levels. *Hṛdaya* - heart as the centre of thought, feeling and emotion - otherwise called the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) is one of them. The point of reference in this case is within the body including the body itself to nullify our habitual identification with the gross and subtle bodies (i.e. *dehatādātmya*) and their modifications like sorrows etc. The inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) is a suitable locus for appreciating pure awareness (*sākṣī*) or *dr̥k*, discarding all that is known (*dr̥śya*). This enables the mind to get absorbed - have *samādhi* - in the true "I" (*ātmā*). *Dr̥k-dr̥śya-viveka* - the discrimination between *dr̥k* cogniser) and *dr̥śya* (cognised) - is the mode employed in the

practice of *samādhi* related to the heart (*hṛdaya*).

The second locus for the practice of *samādhi* is the external world, towards dispelling the wrong notion of taking the dualistic world as real. The erroneous values ascribed to the world in the state of ignorance including the status of reality do create the disturbances that hinder the direct appreciation of Brahman. With reference to the external world, the discrimination between Brahman and the Creation (*Brahma-sarga-viveka*) provides the method for making the mind absorbed in Brahman in this mode of *samādhi*. The name (*nāma*) and form (*rūpa*) are disregarded from the perceived world to focus the attention on its basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) - Brahman available as *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda*.

Irrespective of the locus, whether internal or external, what is discarded is the falsely attributed (*adhyasta*) *dṛśya* (the known) or name (*nāma*) and form (*rūpa*). This leaves the mind free to get absorbed in one and the same *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda* principle called either *ātmā* (the true "I") or Brahman with respect to the internal and external loci respectively.

This verse exhorts a *mumukṣu* - seeker of self-knowledge - to practise contemplation (*nididhyāsana*) as one of the indispensable means in accordance with the scriptural injunction "*nididhyāsitavyaḥ*" (*Bṛ.U.* 2-4-5 and 4-5-6).

## TWO TYPES OF *SAMĀDHI*

Before furnishing the modalities of the practice of *samādhi*, the next verse specifies the two distinct varieties of *samādhi* first. Then it gives the subdivisions of one of them. The actual methods and the details regarding the practice of

*samādhi* are enumerated in the verses from 24 to 29.

सविकल्पो निर्विकल्पः समाधिर्द्विविधो हृदि ।  
दृश्यशब्दानुविद्धेन सविकल्पः पुनर्द्विधा ॥२३॥

*savikalpo nirvikalpaḥ samādhirdvividho hṛdi*  
*dṛśya-śabdānuviddhena savikalpaḥ punardvidhā - (23)*

समाधिः - *samādhi* (absorption of mind) सविकल्पः - recognizing a distinction निर्विकल्पः - without recognizing any distinction (इति - so) द्विविधः - (is) of two kinds पुनः - further सविकल्पः - *savikalpa samādhi* दृश्यशब्दानुविद्धेन - due to association with *dṛśya* (cognised) or the word (of scripture) द्विधा - (is) in two parts (एवं त्रिप्रकारं समाधिं - thus the three types of *samādhi*) हृदि - in the heart (कुर्यात् - be practised). - 23

23. *Samādhi* (the absorption of the mind) is of two kinds, viz. absorption recognizing a distinction (*savikalpa-samādhi*) and the one without recognizing any distinction (*nirvikalpa-samādhi*). The *savikalpa-samādhi* has two further parts depending on its association with *dṛśya* (cognised) or the word (of scripture). Thus, three types of *samādhi* can be practised in the heart (*S.R.U.* 60).

*Savikalpa-samādhi* and *nirvikalpa-samādhi* are the two kinds of *samādhi* based on the recognition or non-recognition of distinction (*vikalpa*) in them. The distinction here is otherwise called a *triputī* - the triple form - like the knower, knowledge and the known; or the contemplator, contemplation and the contemplated; etc.

When the notion of the contemplator (*dhyātā*) and contemplation (*nididhyāsanam* or *dhyāna*) still persists but otherwise

the mind is absorbed in Brahman the contemplated (*dhyeya*), the state is called *savikalpa samādhi*. The word *savikalpa* - recognizing a distinction - is used to show recognition of subject and object or the knower and the known. As the intensity of contemplation progressively increases by repeated practice, the notion of contemplator doing the contemplation gradually vanishes. When there are no more thoughts of even the very presence of the contemplator and contemplation, the mind gets totally preoccupied or absorbed in Brahman. This state of absorption in Brahman is called *nirvikalpa samādhi*. The adjective *nirvikalpa* - without recognizing any distinction - indicates the utter absence of even the knower and the known.

The following two illustrations render clear the distinction between the two types of *samādhi*. Consider a child who mistook a distant elephant made of mud as the real one. The child was persuaded and helped to go near and touch the elephant. On doing so, the child clearly understood that it is mud and yet the vivid form of elephant is also cognised. Similarly on the appreciation of *ātmā*/Brahman in *savikalpa samādhi*, *triputī* - the triple form - is cognised along with it.

The salt thrown and dissolved in water becomes one with it. Thereafter, what is seen is water. The salt is not seen separately. Similarly, the *ātmākāra* or *Brahmākāra vṛtti* (thought of the form of *ātmā*/Brahman) in *nirvikalpa samādhi* is, like salt, undistinguishable from Brahman. What is appreciated is not any separate *vṛtti* but nondual Brahman. There being no division (*vikalpa*) of contemplator and contemplation, the mind is totally absorbed in the contemplated (*dhyeya*), viz. Brahman. So that state is called *nirvikalpa samādhi*. In the case of *savikalpa samādhi* also, there is absorption of mind but it is along with the duality of

contemplator and contemplation. Besides them there can be the presence of other two things used as a means to practise *samādhi*, that will be told hereafter. These two are the main two varieties of *samādhi* irrespective of their loci - internal or external.

### THREE TYPES OF *SAMĀDHI* WITH HEART AS LOCUS

*Savikalpa samādhi* has two subtypes based on the means employed in its practice. The means are *dṛśya* (cognised) and *śabda* (scriptural word). In the initial stages these two are still present and cognised even when the mind is absorbed in *ātmā*/Brahman. In such cases, *samādhi* is said to be *anuviddha* - *miśra/sambaddha* - meaning "mixed with" or "associated with" or "connected to" by *dṛśya* or *śabda* depending on what is utilized.

The two subtypes of *savikalpa-samādhi* are:

- a) *Dṛśyānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhi* or *savikalpa-samādhi* mixed with *dṛśya*.
- b) *Śabdānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhi* or *savikalpa-samādhi* mixed with *śabda*.

Thus there can be two types of *savikalpa samādhi* and by adding *nirvikalpa samādhi* to them we get three varieties. To avoid ambiguity they are listed below in the order in which they are to be practised.

- i) *Dṛśyānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhi*.
- ii) *Śabdānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhi*.
- iii) *Nirvikalpa-samādhi*.

These three kinds of *samādhi* are to be practised with the heart (*hṛdaya*) as the locus. Actually the practice pertains only to the first two. The third one, i.e. *nirvikalpa samādhi*, is a natural outcome of the earlier two when practised for a sufficiently long period of time.

## SIX TYPES OF *SAMĀDHI* IN ALL

Like the three varieties of *samādhi* with respect to the heart, three more with external locus are recommended in the same order. That makes six types of *samādhi* in all to be practised by every seeker (*mumukṣu*). In each of these six kinds, the identity of *sākṣī* (*ātmā*) with Brahman has to be appreciated. Why so will be discussed in the context of verse 29. Now each type of *samādhi* is detailed.

### *DRŚYĀNUVIDDHA-SAVIKALPA-SAMĀDHI* (INTERNAL)

*Savikalpa-samādhi* has to be dealt with first because it leads to the *nirvikalpa* one. Among the two kinds of *savikalpa-samādhi* also, *dṛśyānuviddha* - the one connected to *dṛśya* - can serve as the means to *śabdānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhi* by effacing to an extent the erroneous identification with the embodiment. Therefore first of all *dṛśyānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhi* is described. Its method is based on *dṛk-dṛśya-viveka*. The attention is focussed on *dṛk* - pure awareness, the self-evident cognitive principle - in spite of the presence of various *dṛśyas* (the known thoughts) in the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*/heart). The general tendency of almost all the spiritual seekers is to run away from thoughts as they are unable to face them. Here is an instruction to face the devil as it were if the tyrannical thoughts can be considered as devils. The thoughts themselves can be

used as the means to appreciate true "I"/*sākṣī* and get the mind absorbed in it.

कामाद्याश्चित्तगा दृश्यास्तत्साक्षित्वेन चेतनम् ।

ध्यायेद् दृश्यानुविद्धोऽयं समाधिः सविकल्पकः ॥ २४ ॥

*kāmādyāścittagā dṛśyāstatsākṣitvena cetanam*

*dhyāyed dṛśyānuviddhoyaṃ samādhiḥ savikalpakaḥ - (24)*

कामाद्याः - desire etc. चित्तगाः - (are) available in the *antaḥkaraṇa* (inner instrument) दृश्याः - the known/cognised things तत्साक्षित्वेन - as their direct illuminator चेतनम् - pure awareness, the true "I" (*caitanya*) ध्यायेत् - must contemplate अयं - this (is) दृश्यानुविद्धः - related to the (internal) cognised things सविकल्पकः - recognizing a distinction समाधिः - absorption of mind. - (24)

24. The internal cognised things (*dṛśyas*) like desire etc. are available in the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*). The seeker (*mumukṣu*) must contemplate on pure awareness (*caitanya*) as the direct illuminator of them. This is called *dṛśyānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhi* - absorption of the mind recognizing a distinction, related to the (internal) cognised things (S.R.U. 61).

In verse four, a wide variety of modifications of *antaḥkaraṇa* (inner instrument) called *vṛttis* (thoughts), like desire (*kāma*), consideration (*saṅkalpa*) etc. was shown. There is no dearth of them in our mind. All of them are *dṛśyas* - cognised things - because we know them. However, they are inert (*jaḍa*), and hence they cannot be known on their own. As pointed out in the beginning of this text, the self-existent, self-evident cognitive principle, pure awareness called *sākṣī* (*cit/caitanya*) illumines not

only all of them every time they surface in *antaḥkaraṇa*, but also their absence. This fact is exploited as an effective means for contemplation.

Consider different thoughts as they spring up in the mind one by one without making any choice. Take for instance "desire" (*kāma*). It has a specific name (*nāma*) and form (*rūpa*). Now the thought called "desire" (*kāma*) has to be separated from its direct illuminator - one who makes it known - *sākṣī* or *caitanya* (pure awareness). This is accomplished by focussing the attention on *sākṣī* (*caitanya*) instead of the name and form of the desire (*kāma*). Contemplate that this *sākṣī* (pure awareness) is the true "I" (*ātmā*). Repeat this process without hurry for the next thought, let us say "consideration" (*saikalpa*). Thus, with respect to every thought, one has to continuously contemplate that "Pure awareness (*sākṣī/caitanya*) which illumines - makes the thought known - is my true nature (*ātmā*)".

Let us see this in greater detail. As it obtains we remain totally engrossed in thoughts based on different names (*nāma*) and forms (*rūpa*), their evaluations as good or bad, courting of desired thoughts, shunning the unwanted ones, and the consequent reactions. At no time pure awareness, the illuminator (*sākṣī*/the true "I" ) is under our attention.

Now the verse exhorts us to bring in our purview the indispensable factor, *caitanya* (pure awareness) without whom no cognition is ever possible in the following manner. Disregard all the preoccupations in *dṛśyas* (cognised things) in the mind and remain aware of their illuminator (*sākṣī*). Instead of being indifferent to *sākṣī*, let the indifference be directed towards *dṛśyas* occupying the mind. Thereby the mind gets the leisure to appreciate *caitanya*, the



true "I" (pure awareness). This is not mere imagination but the acknowledging of and the dwelling on the ever-existing pure awareness which was indiscriminately ignored so far. All that needs to be done is to withdraw our preoccupations from the *dṛśyas* by transferring the focus of our attention on *sākṣī* (pure awareness). In the beginning, *dṛśyas* though present, will lose their prominence and their impact will get gradually blunted. In spite of their presence, the mind in due course gets absorbed in pure awareness (*sākṣī*) depending on the intensity of its appreciation. Such state of mental absorption (*saṁādhi*) is called *dṛśyānuviddha* because of its co-existence or association with *dṛśyas* - cognisable things related to the body and *antaḥkaraṇa* of the individual. It is *savikalpa* due to persistence of notional distinctions as contemplator and contemplation.

Pure awareness (*sākṣī/caitanya*) is distinct from the *dṛśyas* (cognised things) illumined - made known - by it. All the erroneous notions about oneself are cognised as the modifications of *antaḥkaraṇa* or what is called as *cittagā dṛśyāḥ* - internal cognised things at the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) level. So the appreciation that the true "I" (*sākṣī*) is the illuminator of *dṛśyas* eliminates the erroneous identification with the gross body, the subtle body and their modifications. The main thrust of *dṛśyānuviddha-savikalpa-saṁādhi* is thus to nullify such erroneous identification. It also helps to make *dṛśyas* like desires (*kāma*) etc. disappear into its basis, the true "I" (*sākṣī*) by discarding them altogether as a result of the clear cognition of true "I". Following are some of the lasting discoveries that an effective *dṛśyānuviddha-savikalpa-saṁādhi* can confer upon the seeker by removal of wrong identifications:

"I" (the true 'I') am not the body, nor the vital airs (*prāṇas*), nor

the group of senses, nor the ego (*ahaṅkāra*), nor the mind, nor even the intellect. I still remain even when all of them including their modifications come to an end. I am truly pure awareness, *sākṣī* who exists for ever."

"I am the illuminator (*sākṣī*) of speech, functions of vital airs (*prāṇas*), intellect, its functions and the sense organs eyes, ears etc. I am truly pure awareness, *sākṣī* who exists for ever."

"I am not obese; I am not emaciated; I am not tall; I am not a child, nor a youth nor even an old person. I am free from all the deficiencies of senses. I am truly pure awareness, *sākṣī* who exists for ever."

"I am not a traveller, nor a doer, nor a prompter, nor a speaker, nor an experiencer, neither joyful nor sorrowful. I am truly pure awareness, *sākṣī* who exists for ever."

"I am not waker, nor dreamer, nor sleeper, nor omniscient, nor inert, nor hearer, nor thinker, nor the knower. I am truly pure awareness, *sākṣī* who exists for ever."

"In reality, I have no connection with body, senses or *antaḥkāraṇa* (inner instrument). Merit (*puṇya*) and sin (*pāpa*) have nothing to do with me. I am free from recurring hunger, thirst etc. I am truly pure awareness, *sākṣī*, who exists for ever."

### ŚABDĀNUVIDDHA-SAVIKALPA-SAMĀDHI (INTERNAL)

Having shown the *dṛśya* related *savikalpa-samādhī*, *śabdānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhī*, the next one in order, is now described. This *samādhī* is centred on the direct appreciation of

*sākṣī* to the total disappearance (*vilāpana*) of all *dṛśyas* - cognised things. Yet, it is mixed with *śabda* - the scriptural words utilized for this purpose. *Śabdānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhī* (internal) has its emphasis on the appreciation of *sākṣī*, the true "I" by using the words from *Upaniṣads* which reveal this truth at an individual level.

असङ्गः सच्चिदानन्दः स्वप्रभो द्वैतवर्जितः ।  
अस्मीतिशब्दविद्धोऽयं समाधिः सविकल्पकः ॥२५॥

*asaṅgaḥ saccidānandaḥ svaprabho dvaitavarjitaḥ*  
*asmīti-śabdaviddhoyaṁ samādhīḥ savikalpakaḥ* - (25)

असङ्गः - unattached      सच्चिदानन्दः - *sat* (the ever-existence principle), *cit* (pure awareness), *ānanda* (the absolute happiness)  
स्वप्रभः - self-luminous (cognizably)      द्वैतवर्जितः - non-dual      अस्मि - I am  
इति (भावयेत्) - so (one must contemplate)      अयं - this (is called)  
शब्दविद्धः - mixed with scriptural words      सविकल्पकः - with the recognition of distinction      समाधिः - absorption of mind. - (25)

25. The seeker must contemplate, "I am unattached, *sat cit ānanda*, self-luminous (cognizably) non-dual". This is called *śabdānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhī* - absorption of the mind with the recognition of distinction, and mixed with scriptural words (S.R.U. 62).

The words or the phrases from the Vedas/*Upaniṣads* that reveal the nature of true "I" (*ātmā*) are utilized in *śabdānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhī*. Those words by which the true "I" was ascertained during *śravaṇa* (self-inquiry), become handy in contemplation to repeatedly appreciate the same *sākṣī* (*ātmā*).

This is not *japa* which entails merely a repeated preoccupation of a specific name of *Īśvara*/deity or a *mantra* - a formula of prayer. Earlier *śravaṇa* (self-inquiry) and *manana* (reflection) are necessary to enable those words to help in contemplation. The manifestation of knowledge (*sphuraṇa*) through these words is sought-after rather than their remembrance (*smaraṇa*). The verse mentions a few such words. Other similar words can also be co-opted according to one's need and flair.

### *Asaṅgaḥ :*

*Saṅga* means a union, contact, connection or attachment. Not having any *saṅga* is *asaṅga* - unconnected/unattached. In the presence of pure awareness (*sākṣī*) the states of waking, dream and sleep come and go. They have no bearing on the *sākṣī*, because it is not a party to all the happenings in the three states of consciousness. A thing having form or more precisely attributes (i.e. *mūrta*) can establish contact with the body and senses, which themselves also have attributes. Such contacts provide the cause of actions. Pure awareness, the true "I" (*sākṣī*) is attributeless and formless (i.e. *amūrta*). It cannot have any connection or union with the embodiment. So it cannot be the cause of any actions. Thus true "I" (*sākṣī*) is totally unattached to all the actions and the experiences that take place in the embodiment even though they occur in the presence of *sākṣī* - pure awareness. It is like the sun being unattached (*asaṅga*) to the world that gets illumined in its presence. The clear recognition of true "I" (*sākṣī*) being *asaṅga* confers at once the freedom from limitations of *saṃsāra* - mundane existence. In this way the word *asaṅga* with the appreciation of its true import can induce contemplation on true "I" (*sākṣī*). *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* has declared, "This *ātmā* is indeed *asaṅga*" (*Bṛ.U.* 4-3-15/16).

### *Sac'cidānanda :*

The phrase *sat cit ānanda* is already elaborated at length. It reveals the true "I" in sharp contrast to all *dṛśyas* - cognised things (*anātmā*) - whose nature is *asat* (false), *acit* (inert) and *anānanda* (sources of sorrow). There are many *Vedic* sentences that state the *sat cit ānanda* nature of *sākṣī*. "Brahman is *satyam jñānam anantam*" (*Tai.U.* 2-1) and "Brahman is pure awareness (*viññānam*) that is *ānanda*" are good examples. The word *anantam* - limitless - in the above quotation, implies *ānanda* (happiness), because limitation invariably breeds sorrow and it is the characteristic feature of *anātmā* (not-self). So *ānanda* (happiness) can only be the nature of Brahman or *ātmā* (pure awareness) distinct from not self. This fact is also reaffirmed by another *Upaniṣadic* statement that Brahman is *ānanda*.

### *Svaprabhaḥ :*

"Cognizably self-luminous" (*svaprabhaḥ* or *svaprakāśaḥ*) means the self-existent, self-evident cognitive principle, otherwise called *sākṣī*. The ultimate *dṛk* was shown to be self-luminous *sākṣī* in the course of inquiry regarding *dṛk* and *dṛśya*. Such nature of *sākṣī*, the true "I" can be known from the *Upaniṣads*. Passages like, "Brahman is not seen by any one because it is not an object of sight whereas it is the actual knowledge or cognitive principle by which eyes are able to see. Similarly Brahman is not heard, being not an object of hearing; on the contrary ears can hear only because of its presence" (*Bṛ.U.* 3-8-11), and "You cannot see or objectify *ātmā* who is the illuminator of thought (*antaḥkaraṇa vṛtti*) that makes you see the form" (*Bṛ.U.* 3-4-2) amply establish the self-luminous nature of true "I".

### *Dvaita-varjitaḥ :*

Literally *dvaita-varjitaḥ* means "devoid of duality". One may doubt how can *ḍṛk* - pure awareness (*sākṣī*) - be free from duality when cognised things (*ḍṛśyas*) like desire (*kāma*) etc. are evidently experienced. Here the position of *ḍṛśya* vis-a-vis *ḍṛk* merits consideration. *Ḍṛk* (pure awareness) is the basis of all *ḍṛśyas* (cognised things) without whom *ḍṛśyas* have no existence. So *ḍṛk* is the truth that exists forever whereas the *ḍṛśyas* being transient are false. A false thing cannot impose duality like the falsely superimposed snake over the rope. That is how *dvaita-varjitaḥ* finally means non-dual, the one that is free from all types of divisions whatsoever. *Chāndogyopaniṣad* substantiates this fact in its statement "*Sat* (i.e. Brahman) is truly one (*ekam*) - free from divisions (*bheda*) obtained in itself (*svagata*) and within species (*sajātīya*). It is also non-dual (*advitīyam*) - free from divisions (*bhedā*) due to different species, i.e. *vijātīya*" (*Ch.U.* 6-2-1/2).

A few more *Upaniṣadic* words or phrases that can be useful in this type of contemplation are cited below:

"I am free from ignorance (*śuddhoham*)."

"I am cognitive principle *cit* (*buddhoham*)."

"I exist for ever as the true 'I'."

"I am limitless (*anantoham*)."

"I am absolute happiness."

"I am not an object of mind or words."

"I am non-divisible knowledge principle (*akhaṇḍa-bodharūpoham*)."

"I am distinct from both known and unknown (*viditāviditānyoham*)."

"I am free from effects of *māyā*."

"I am ceaseless cognitive principle."

"I have no old age (*ajaroham*)."

"I am indestructible (*akṣaroham*)."

"I am self-evident knowledge principle (*svayaṃ-jyotiraham*)."

"I am actionless/desireless (*nirīhoṣmī*)."

"I am full (*nirāśoṣmī*)."

"I am independent (*svasthoṣmī*)."

"I am content/free from

desires (*nispṛhaḥ asmi*). "I am calm/undisturbed/free from passions (*śāntoḥam*)".

In this manner the true "I" (*sākṣī*) as unfolded by these words has to be continuously contemplated upon. Herein all the thoughts (*vṛttis*) pertaining to *dṛśyas* (cognised things) like *kāma* (desire) disappear from the mind because it is absorbed in the appreciation of true "I" - pure awareness (*cit*). Out of focus, the *dṛśyas* get out of mind. Yet, the words from *Upaniṣads* used for the purpose of contemplation along with the distinctions of contemplator (*dhyātā*) and contemplation (*dhyāna*) still persist. Such an absorbed state of mind centred in the appreciation of pure awareness (*sākṣī/cit*) is *śabdānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhi*.

#### NIRVIKALPA-SAMĀDHI (INTERNAL)

So far two kinds of *savikalpa-samādhi* were described. These two when practised for a sufficiently long time lead to *nirvikalpa-samādhi* with the total and steady absorption of mind in the true "I" (*sākṣī* - pure awareness). The cognised things (*dṛśyas*), the words (*śabdas*) and the triple form (*triputī*) lingering in the earlier two types of *samādhi* no longer persist. Here follows the description of *nirvikalpa samādhi* at the internal level of an individual.

स्वानुभूतिरसावेशाद् दृश्यशब्दानुपेक्षितुः ।

निर्विकल्पः समाधिः स्यान्निवातस्थितदीपवत् ॥२६॥

*svānubhūtirasāveśād dṛśyaśabdānupekṣitūḥ*

*nirvikalpaḥ samādhīḥ syānnivātaasthitadīpavat - (26)*

स्वानुभूतिरसावेशात् - from the complete absorption in the true "I"

that is at once knowledge principle (*anubhūti/caitanya*) and happiness (*rasa*) दृश्यशब्दान् - *dṛśyas* (cognised things) and the words उपेक्षितुः - to the one who disregards निर्विकल्पः समाधिः - *samādhi* without the recognition of distinction स्यात् - pertains निवातस्थितदीपवत् - (the absorbed mind is) like a lamp placed in a calm place. - (26)

26. The person who disregards cognised things (*dṛśya*) and the words (*śabda*) has *nirvikalpa-samādhi* from the complete absorption in the true "I" that is at once knowledge principle and happiness. (The absorbed mind is) like a lamp placed in a calm - windless - place (S.R.U. 63).

#### *Dṛśya-śabdān upekṣituḥ:*

In the two *savikalpa-samādhis* *dṛśya* and *śabda* were utilized. Like the pole in the pole-vault, both *dṛśya* and *śabda* serve as the means to trigger off - lead - the mind into the absorption in the true "I" (*sākṣī* - pure awareness). Finally *dṛśya* and *śabda* will have to be left behind like the pole once the complete absorption is accomplished. They are now a hindrance like pole for jumping down in pole-vault. Therefore the contemplator too disregards *dṛśya* and *śabda*. This is shown by the phrase *dṛśya-śabdān upekṣituḥ* - to the one who withdraws the attention from *dṛśya* and *śabda* - to describe at this stage the status of the contemplator.

#### *Svānubhūti-rasāveśāt:*

The source of *nirvikalpa-samādhi* is pointed out in the first quarter of this verse, *svānubhūti-rasāveśāt* - from the complete absorption in the true "I" that is *caitanya* (pure awareness) and itself happiness (*ānanda*). Generally *anubhūti* means an experience, but



the word is also used for the ultimate cognitive/knowledge (*jñāna*) principle itself, i.e. *caitanya* (pure awareness) the true "I". Pure awareness (*caitanya*) being self-evident, is itself of the nature of experience (*anubhava-svarūpa*). So the name *anubhūti* is appropriate for pure awareness. *Sva* - natural or one's own - indicates *anubhūti* as the true "I" (*svānubhūti*). *Rasa* is *Paramātmā* - Brahman - whose nature itself is *ānanda* (happiness). *Raso vai saḥ* - *Paramātmā* (Brahman) is indeed happiness - is revealed in *Taittirīyopaniṣad* (2-7). The true "I" (*ātmā*) is identical with Brahman and so its nature is also *ānanda* (happiness). This can be verified from the fact that "I" is the locus of limitless love (*parama-premāspada*) which is possible only when "I" itself is limitless happiness (*parānanda*). Thus *svānubhūtirasa* stands for the true "I" (*ātmā*) that is pure awareness (*caitanya*) and is happiness (*rasa/ānanda*) itself .

The last word *āveśa* in the phrase under consideration has in this context the following four applicable meanings:

- i) "Intentness - being attentively preoccupied with (*abhiniveśa*) - in the sense of being completely absorbed (*magnatvam*)."

Thereby *āveśa* shows the complete absorption of mind in *svānubhūtirasa*.

- ii) "Manifestation - becoming evident (*āvirbhāva*)."

So, *svānubhūtirasāveśa* means the manifestation of the real nature of oneself in its true form of pure awareness (*caitanya*) identical with limitless happiness. The word "manifestation" may sound strange since the true "I" (*ātmā*) is always present in its real nature (*svarūpa*) and can never become otherwise. In

view of this fact, it may be argued whether there can ever be a specific event or occasion or place for it to manifest its nature ! It is true that *ātmā* (the true "I") never loses its nature. Yet, in the state of ignorance, as individuals we experience our nature contrary (*yathārtha*) to what it really is. This happens due to erroneous superimposition of the not-self (*anātmā*), their functions, modifications and attributes on *ātmā*. Knowledge of a given thing is determined by its nature (i.e. it is *vastutantra*). Any appreciation of a thing not in accordance with the nature of the thing cannot be its true knowledge. Accordingly clear cognition (*yathārtha darśana*) of *ātmā* (the true "I") totally distinct from all the superimposed things can only be its direct knowledge (*aparokṣa jñāna* or *aparokṣa anubhava*) and not otherwise. Simply parroting the words from scriptures, like "I am free from all falsely superimposed not self (*anātmā*)" howsoever vociferously, cannot ever be the actual knowledge. In fact the falseness of superimposed not self (*anātmā*) can be really known only in the wake of the clear cognition of true "I" free from not-self. This being so, the clear cognition of "I" in its true nature is specified here as a manifestation (*āveśa*). It is like saying, "The sun is bright now", when the clouds covering it have moved away. Truly the sun had never lost its brightness. It is for people to interpret as they want, whether bright appearance of the sun is a manifestation or an event. The same stance applies to the clear cognition of true "I" (*ātmā*). It can be described as manifestation (*āveśa*) in contrast to earlier contrary notion about it. To argue that it is an event or not is futile. It is only an exercise of sidetracking the main issue of clear cognition (*yathārtha darśana*) of true "I" (*ātmā*) which is indispensable.

iii) "All around penetration (*āsamantāt praveśaḥ*)".

In this sense, the word *āveśa* in the phrase *svānubhūtirasāveśa* speaks of the fullness or non-dual status of true "I" as pure awareness (*caitanya*) of the nature of *ānanda*. This appreciation of fullness is on account of the direct cognition of what the true "I" (*ātmā*) is as stated in this verse.

iv) "Influence upon (the contemplator's mind)".

Through this meaning of *āveśa*, the grip of the influence that the appreciation of *svānubhūtirasa* has upon the contemplator's mind, leading the contemplator to *nirvikalpa-samādhi* is emphasized. The irresistible influence precludes the mind from persisting as a separate identity and makes it merge indistinguishably with *sākṣī*. What remains is the complete absorption in appreciation of *svānubhūtirasa*.

All the four meanings of *āveśa* alluded to here bring out the different facets of the direct appreciation of what the true "I" is. By taking the ablative case, the phrase *svānubhūtirasāveśa* becomes *svānubhūtirasāveśāt*. Thereby it indicates the source which confers *nirvikalpa samādhi* to the contemplator.

There is an alternate reading of *svānubhūtirasāsvadāt* in place of *svānubhūtirasāveśāt*. Literally *āsvāda* means tasting or experiencing. In either tasting or experiencing there is a close connection between the subject who tastes or experiences and what is being tasted or experienced. Let us investigate what kind of connection is there in the *āsvāda* (experiencing) of *svānubhūtirasa*.

The true "I" (*ātmā*) is the real nature or the content of the subject and so is not available as an object of experience. Yet, the nature of *ātmā* is nothing but experience (*anubhava-svarūpa*) that

needs no separate agency of experiencing it. In the state of ignorance also, *ātmā* ("I") is of the nature of experience (*anubhavasvarūpa*), but that experience of "I" is not in conformity (*ayathārtha*) with *svānubhūtirasa* as described here; it is on the contrary exactly the opposite to what it is. It is experienced as a miserable *saṃsārī*. In contrast to it, now with fructification of contemplation (*nididhyāsana*) after following a proper self-inquiry (*śravaṇa*) in accordance with *Upaniṣads* and reflection (*manana*) on it the experience of "I" - in its own true nature itself, but not as an object - is in conformity (*yathārtha*) with *svānubhūtirasa*. It is in this sense that *Upaniṣads* speak about the *anubhava* (experience) of true "I". Unlike all other experiences, this is a unique experience without the usual triple form (*triputī*). This is the direct knowledge (*aparokṣa jñāna*) of true "I" (*ātmā*). Anything falling short of it, is not so because, knowledge has to be *vastutantra* - in strict conformity with the thing. The word "knowledge" (*jñāna*) as used in Vedānta is distinct from all other kinds of knowledge which have the triple form (*triputī*).

In this context of true "I" (*ātmā*), in the light of what we have seen so far as regards the word *āsvāda* (experiencing), the close connection between the subject and the object - in fact *ātmā* cannot be an object - is acceptance (*svīkaraṇam*) based on the direct cognition, as follows. The acceptance (*svīkaraṇam*) of *svānubhūtirasa* as the true "I" (*ātmā*) in the form "I am of the nature of pure awareness (*cit*) and happiness (*ānanda*)" is *svānubhūti-rasāsvāda*. One can conclude that contextwise the word "*āsvāda*" thus means *āveśā*. Later we shall see how this discovery includes the appreciation of the identity of the individual "I" (*ātmā*) with Brahman.

The above mentioned alternate reading corresponding to this

verse is not available in the *mantra* of *Sarasvatī Rahasyopaniṣad*. But the word *rasāsvāda* appearing in the 29th verse, having the same meaning as arrived at here, is also found in the corresponding *mantra* of the same *Upaniṣad* (S.R.U. 65). This establishes that the word *āsvāda* - experiencing - as used in such contexts is in accordance with the *Upaniṣads*, and not coined by any of the later masters of Vedānta.

So far, how exactly the two *savikalpa samādhis* lead to *nirvikalpa* state was discussed. An illustration is now given to portray the steadiness of the absorbed mind in *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. Just as the flame of a lamp, placed in a calm place remains steady, so is the state of the mind absorbed in *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. Lord Kṛṣṇa has himself described in *Bhagavadgītā* such a state of an absorbed mind.

यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङ्गते सोपमा स्मृता ।  
योगिनो यतचित्तस्य युञ्जतो योगमात्मनः ॥

"Just as a lamp, placed in a calm place, does not flicker, for describing what is the absorbed mind of the contemplator who practises contemplation of the self, this illustration is cited." (B.G. 6-19).

Another interesting description of such a state of *samādhi* can be considered.

अन्तः शून्यो बहिः शून्यः शून्यकुम्भ इवाम्बरे ।  
अन्तः पूर्णो बहिः पूर्णः पूर्णकुम्भ इवार्णवे ॥

"Empty within, empty without, like an empty pot in space; full within, full without, like a full pot in the ocean." (*Yogavāsīṣṭha*,

The emptiness in *nirvikalpa-samādhi* refers to the absence (*abhāva*) of otherwise cognised name (*nāma*) and form (*rūpa*) in other states of waking and dream. Lest the word "empty" (*śūnya*) is misunderstood as non-existence, the illustration of ocean is given to substantiate the fullness (*pūrṇatvam*). The pot (*kumbha*) indicates the erstwhile embodiment of the contemplator which has lost its false individuality of the name and form in the fullness that is Brahman.

### *DRŚYĀNUVIDDHA-SAVIKALPA-SAMĀDHI* (EXTERNAL)

The three kinds of *samādhi* with respect to the internal locus of heart (*hṛdaya*) have been described so far. The same three types of *samādhi* with the external locus are now discussed; the first being *drśyānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhi* (external). The method adopted is *Brahma-sarga-viveka* - the discrimination between Brahman and the Creation. The attention of the contemplator is focussed on Brahman - *sat cit ānanda* - in the presence of the cognised things of the world (*drśyas*).

हृदीव बाह्यदेशेऽपि यस्मिन् कस्मिंश्च वस्तुनि ।

समाधिराद्यः सन्मात्रान्नामरूपपृथक्कृतिः ॥२७॥

*hṛdīva bāhyadeśepi yasmin kasminśca vastuni  
samādhirādyah sanmātrānnāmarūpa-pṛthakkṛtiḥ* - (27)

हृदि - in the heart (*antaḥkaraṇa*) इव - as बाह्यदेशे - in an external region अपि - also यस्मिन् कस्मिंश्च वस्तुनि - in any thing सन्मात्रात् - from the only Brahman नामरूपपृथक्कृतिः - distinguishing

the name and form आद्यः - the first समाधिः - *samādhi*. - (27)

27. As in the heart (*antaḥkaraṇa*), externally also distinguishing the name and form in any thing from the only Brahman is the first type of *samādhi* (viz. *dṛśyānuviddha savikalpa*) (*S.R.U.* 64).

The first variety of *samādhi* refers to *dṛśyānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhi*. With the heart (*antaḥkaraṇa*) as the locus, each thought having its name (*nāma*) and form (*rūpa*) was distinguished (*prthakkaraṇam*) from the true "I" (*ātmā*). This distinguishing or separating (*prthakkaraṇam*) is to contemplate that "I am *sākṣī* (pure awareness/*caitanya*) that illumines the thought" by disregarding the name and form. That was *dṛśyānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhi* (internal).

Similarly, i.e. *hṛdi iva* - as in the heart - externally the contemplator has to consider any cognised object (*dṛśya*). It can be any object of one's choice or the one that one comes across. Each of the objects has the invariable pentad of facets comprising *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda*, name (*nāma*) and form (*rūpa*). As highlighted in verse 20, the triad of *sat cit ānanda* is Brahman, whereas pair of name and form is the world (*jagat*). No name (*nāma*) and form (*rūpa*) can exist or be cognised without *sat cit ānanda* (Brahman) as the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*). Superimposed name (*nāma*) and form (*rūpa*) will have to be distinguished (*prthakkrtiḥ*) from their basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) Brahman who is *sat cit ānanda*. In this verse, Brahman is indicated through *sat* as existence aspect. This can be very readily appreciated in everything. Having thus distinguished, the attention has to be focussed on the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) Brahman disregarding the name and form of the object (*dṛśya*) under consideration. While appreciating the basis, Brahman, the identity of individual that "I

(*ātmanā*) am Brahman" is also to be considered. Otherwise Brahman will not be so because of duality imposed by "I". Such a contemplation leads to the absorption of mind in the very basis of the world, Brahman, even though the external things (*dṛśyas*) are still cognizably present. This is called *dṛśyānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhi* (external) - the absorption of mind in Brahman recognizing a distinction of contemplator and the contemplated (*vikalpa*) in the presence of external *dṛśyas* to begin with. The following are some demonstrations in the practice of *dṛśyānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhi* (external):

"This name and form called earth is not Brahman, nor is the water, nor is the fire, nor is the air nor is the space. Whatever is the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of these, that *sat* (existence) - Brahman - free from all the names and forms, is truly 'I' (*aham*)."

"The sound is not Brahman, nor is the visual form, nor is the touch, nor is the taste, nor is the smell. Whatever is the basis of these, that *sat* (existence) - Brahman, free from all the names and forms, is truly 'I'."

"The group of substances is not Brahman, nor are the attributes, nor are the actions, nor are the species, nor are any other things cognised. Whatever is the basis of these, that *sat* (existence) - Brahman - free from all the names and forms, is truly 'I'."

"This gross body is not Brahman, nor are the senses, nor are the vital airs (*prāṇas*), nor is the mind, nor is the intellect, nor is the faculty of recollection (*cittam*), nor is the ego (*ahaṅkāra*). Whatever is the basis of these, that *sat* (existence) - Brahman - free from all the names and forms, is truly 'I'."



"Space is not Brahman, nor is time, nor are the quarters, nor other things gross or subtle. Whatever is the basis of these, that *sat* (existence) - Brahman - free from all the names and other forms, is truly 'I'."

The following verse from *Yogavāsishtha* gives a clue towards contemplating on Brahman with the entire Creation as *dṛśya* at one stretch:

यत्र स्थितेयं विश्वश्रीः प्रतिभामात्ररूपिणी ।  
रज्ज्वां भुजङ्गवद्भाति सोऽहमात्मा सदोदितः ॥

"I am the ever-existent (and so never extinct) *ātmā* (pure awareness/*caitanya*) - identical with Brahman - abiding (being superimposed) in whom this splendour of the entire Creation in the form of only a false appearance is cognised like the snake in a rope."

In this verse, the presenting of *ātmā* itself as the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the Creation, reveals its identity with Brahman.

This type of *samādhi* can be practised at all times and all places. Ādī Śaṅkarācārya has given the following guidelines regarding the *dṛśyānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhi* (external).

आरोपिते नामरूपे उपेक्ष्य ब्रह्मणः सतः ।  
स्वरूपमात्रग्रहणं समाधिर्बाह्य आदिमः ॥

"Having disregarded the name and form, the appreciation of only the true nature of ever-existent Brahman is the first variety of external *samādhi*, viz. *dṛśyānuviddha*." - (S.V.S.S. 892/3).

गच्छंस्तिष्ठन्वा शयानोऽपि नित्यं कुर्याद्विद्वान्बाह्यद्रयानुविद्धम् ।

"A wise person must always practise the external *dr̥śyānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhi* while walking, standing and also while lying down" (S. V.S.S.S. 891).

### ŚABDĀNUVIDDHA-SAVIKALPA-SAMĀDHI (EXTERNAL)

The next in the order is *śabdānuviddha savikalpa samādhi* that causes both the macrocosmic (*samaṣṭi*) and microcosmic (*vyaṣṭi*) *dr̥śyas* (the cognised things) to disappear from one's cognition. As in the similar type of *samādhi* but with internal locus, here also the *Vedic/Upaniṣadic* words that reveal Brahman and its identity with *ātmā/sākṣī* are used. Some words or phrases are common for both internal and external loci because of the non-dual nature of Brahman. The modality of *śabdānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhi* is described now.

अखण्डैकरसं वस्तु सच्चिदानन्दलक्षणम् ।

इत्यविच्छिन्नचिन्तेयं समाधिर्मध्यमो भवेत् ॥२८॥

*akhaṇḍaikaṛasaṃ vastu saccidānandalakṣaṇam*  
*ityavicchinna-cinteyaṃ samādhir-madhyamo bhavet-* (28)

इयं - this अखण्डैकरसं - full (undivided) and unchanging  
सच्चिदानन्दलक्षणम् - characterised by *sat cit ānanda* (यद् - which)  
वस्तु - thing (तदेव ब्रह्म - that itself is Brahman) इति - of this nature  
अविच्छिन्नचिन्ता - uninterrupted contemplation मध्यमः - middle  
समाधिः - *samādhi* भवेत् - is. - (28)

28. This uninterrupted contemplation as "the thing which is full (undivided) and unchanging, and characterised by *sat cit ānanda*

is Brahman itself" is the middle *saṁādhi*, i.e. *śabdānuviddha-savikalpa-saṁādhi*.

### *Akhaṇḍam:*

That entity which is free from the limitations of space (*deśa*), time (*kāla*) and object (*vastu*) is called *akhaṇḍam* - full or undivided. Brahman being all pervasive, has no spatial limitations. It has no temporal - relating to time - limitation because it is eternal - indestructible. Brahman is the basis of everything. Nothing has existence apart from it. Thereby it has no limitations objectwise also. In short, Brahman has no divisions abiding in itself (*svagata*), or within all the members of same species (*sajātīya*) and members of other species (*vijātīya*). The *Upaniṣad* also asserts this truth in its statement "*Ekamevādvitīyam* - Brahman is truly one and non-dual" (*Ch.U.* 6-2-1/2).

### *Ekarasam :*

The thing that remains the same at all the times - in past, present and future - without any modification in itself is *ekarasam* or also called *kūṭastham*. Brahman is so. Lord Kṛṣṇa describes it as *avikārī* (*B.G.* 2-25).

That which is both *akhaṇḍam* and *ekarasam* is called *akhaṇḍaikarasam*. *Sat cit ānanda* has been explained earlier. The continuous (*avicchinna*) - uninterrupted - contemplation (*cintā*) that the thing, as described in the above verse is Brahman, has to be practised. The contemplation has to be in the form of continuous flow of thoughts (*sajātīya-pratyaya-pravāha*) that appreciate Brahman without the distractions of dissimilar thoughts (*vijātīya-pratyayas*). The resultant absorption of the mind in Brahman is

*śabdānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhī*. The *śabda* - the words from scriptures - leaned upon are still present in the mind although the *dṛśyas* are no more registered.

Words or phrases similar to the one given in this verse can be employed to appreciate Brahman as the true "I". A few more useful phrases are mentioned below:

"I am really the changeless (*nirvikāram*), formless (*nirākāram*), free from afflictions (*nirañjanam*), free from sorrows (*anāmayam*), beginningless and the endless (*ādyantarahitam*) and full (*pūrṇam*) Brahman."

"I am verily stainless/free from passions (*niṣkalaṅkam*), fearless (*nirātāṅkam*), free from limitations of space, time and object (*trividhacchedavarjītam*), absolute happiness (*ānandam*), indestructible (*akṣaram*) and the liberated (*muktaṁ*) Brahman."

"I am truly attributeless (*nirviśeṣam*), free from falsely projected world (*nirābhāsam*), ever-liberated (*nityamuktaṁ*), unchangeable/immutable (*avikriyam*), unchanging cognitive principle (*prajñānaikarasam*), and the ultimate truth (*satyam*) Brahman."

"I am the most subtle - imperceptible to sense organs and the mind - (*susūkṣmam*), the only existence principle (*astitā-mātram*), undivided (*nirvikalpam*), all-pervasive (*mahattamam*), absolute (*kevalam*), the most exalted and non-dual (*paramādvaitam*) Brahman."

As already hinted it has to be kept in mind that these words or phrases can help to contemplate provided the mind is ready and

has previously undertaken fruitful self-inquiry (*śravaṇa*) and reflection (*manana*). The language - Sanskrit or otherwise - of these words is secondary. What is important is the content and not the container.

### NIRVIKALPA-SAMĀDHI (EXTERNAL)

After having described the two types of *savikalpa-samādhi* (external) in this way, *nirvikalpa-samādhi* is considered. It is the outcome of earlier two types of *samādhi*. In this state both *dṛśyas* (cognised things) and *śabdās* (words) employed hitherto disappear. At the end of description the contemplator is exhorted to practise these six kinds of *samādhi* constantly for a sufficiently long period till it is no longer necessary.

स्तब्धीभावो रसास्वादात्तृतीयः पूर्ववन्मतः ।

एतैः समाधिभिः षड्भिर्नयेत्कालं निरन्तरम् ॥२९॥

*stabdhībhāvo rasāsvādāt tṛtīyaḥ pūrvavanmataḥ  
etaiḥ samādhibhiḥ ṣaḍbhirnayetkālaṁ niranteram - (29)*

रसास्वादात् - Due to the absorption of mind in Brahman, the true nature of oneself पूर्ववत् - as aforesaid स्तब्धीभावः - steadiness तृतीयः - the third (*samādhi*) मतः - is regarded एतैः षड्भिः समाधिभिः - by the practice of these six *samādhis* (मुमुक्षुः - the spiritual seeker) निरन्तरम् - constantly कालं नयेत् - should spend the time - (29)

29. The steady abidance of mind due to the absorption in Brahman, the true nature of oneself, as told previously in the case of *nirvikalpa-samādhi* (internal) is regarded as the third type of

*samādhi*, viz. *nirvikalpa-samādhi* (external). The *mumukṣu* (spiritual seeker) should constantly spend the time in practice of these six types of *samādhi* (*S.R.U.* 65).

The word *rasa* - *Paramātmā*/Brahman whose nature itself is *ānanda* (happiness) - was commented upon in verse 26. The meaning of *āsvāda* (experiencing) compounded with *rasa* as *rasāsvāda* - direct discovery of true "I"/Brahman in the form of absorbed mind in it - also was discussed at that juncture in great detail. The synonymic nature of both the words *āsvāda* and *āveśa* in this context was also highlighted.

Before commenting on this verse it is imperative to understand properly the necessity and why of appreciating *Brahmātmaikya* - the identity of Brahman and *ātmā* (*sākṣī*) - in all *samādhis*. The reasons differ as regards the internal and external loci.

- i) All the three *samādhis* based on internal (*āntara*) locus are centred on *sākṣī* - self-illuminating knowledge/cognitive principle, the true "I". The status of *sākṣī* as *sākṣī* and a steady absorption of the mind in *sākṣī* (i.e. *samādhi*) are possible only if *sākṣī* is identical with Brahman. If not so, *sākṣī* will exhibit limitations (*paricchinatā*) on account of Brahman. A limited (*paricchinna*) thing is subject to change or modification (*vikāra*). Any modifying thing (*vikārī*) is invariably destructible (*naśya*). Any destructible (*naśya*) thing is inert (*jaḍa*). An inert thing cannot be *sākṣī* - the one who cognisably illuminates or makes known all *dṛśyas* (cognised things/*sākṣya*) in its presence. No other *sākṣī* distinct from Brahman can be available at individual level because Brahman is the only self-cognitive principle in and through the Creation. In the absence of such a *sākṣī*, the

three types of *samādhi* are not possible. Therefore all the three types of internal *samādhi* necessarily have at their backdrop the appreciation of identity (*abhinnatā*) with Brahman.

- ii) The other three types of *samādhi* with external (*bāhya*) locus are centred on Brahman. Brahman is the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the Creation. So, it is the true nature of everything including all individuals. This is called *sarvātmatva* - the status of being *ātmā* or the true nature of all. This is not possible if Brahman is different from *ātmā/sākṣī* at individual level. Otherwise the individual having independence will impose limitations on Brahman. In that case it ceases to be limitless, non-dual Brahman. The nature of Brahman is also *rasa* - limitless happiness (*ānanda*) and that is the ultimate source of any form of happiness. The *rasa* (happiness) nature of *ātmā/sākṣī* can therefore be established and discovered provided Brahman and *ātmā* are identical. Then only the phrases *svānubhūtirasāveśa* of verse 26 and *rasāsvāda* in this verse can hold good. Hence the appreciation of identity with Brahman in these three types of external *samādhi* also is indispensable.

The absorption of mind in Brahman, wherein its nature of absolute happiness (*rasa*) is directly appreciated, leads to the steady abidance of the mind in Brahman. This state of mind is called *nirvikalpa-samādhi* (external). The only distinction between the two types of *nirvikalpa-samādhi*, internal and external, is the locus of practice. The mention of *pūrvavat* - as told previously - indicates the following similar features as found in the internal and external ones:

- i) The constant practice of external *dṛṣyānuviddha* and *śabdānuviddha samādhis* for a sufficiently long period results in

the absorption of mind in Brahman that leads to *nirvikalpa-samādhi* (external).

- ii) The entire *dṛśyas* (cognised things) both microcosmic and macrocosmic in nature along with the scriptural words used as the initial means are given up (i.e. *upekṣa* of *dṛśya* and *śabda*) on the strength of mind being absorbed in Brahman directly cognized, viz. *āsvāda*.
- iii) The steadiness of mind under the influence of such an absorption is like the flame of a lamp placed in a calm place (*nivāsthitā-dīpavat*). It is described here by the word *stabdhībhāvaḥ* - steadiness or firmness - also called *nīścalatvam*.

The following description of *nirvikalpa-samādhi* (external) can help us to understand it better.

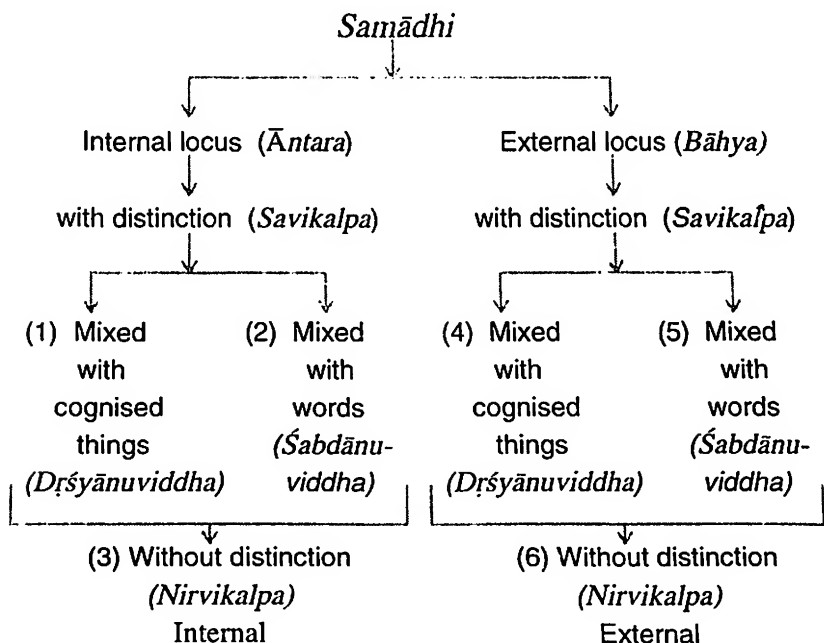
ब्रह्मानन्दरसावेशादेकीभूय तदात्मना ।  
वृत्तेर्या निश्चलावस्था स समाधिरकल्पकः ॥

"Having become one with *Brahmānanda* - happiness that is Brahman - the steady state of *Brahmākāravṛtti* (the thought of the form of Brahman) due to complete absorption in Brahman having the nature of happiness, is *nirvikalpa-samādhi* (S.V.S.S. 899)."

In all we have seen six kinds of *samādhi*. Out of these, four - two each having internal and external locus respectively - are *savikalpa* (with distinction of triple form/*triputī*) in nature whereas the remaining two are *nirvikalpa* (without distinction). *Savikalpa-samādhi* of both types internal and external has either *dṛśya* (cognised things) or *śabda* (*Upaniṣadic* words) as their



means. *Nirvikalpa-samādhi* of either type is totally free from *dṛśya*, *śabda* and *triputī* (the triple form). They are achieved by sufficiently long practice of *savikalpa* ones. In fact *savikalpa* and *nirvikalpa* are the only two basic types of *samādhi*. But based on the means and the locus employed we categorise them in the six varieties. The following chart will show at one glance the locus, the means, and the nature of all the types of *samādhi* :



The second line of this verse lays emphasis on the constant practice of these six types of *samādhi* for a sufficiently long period. The constancy of practice is conveyed by the two words *nirantaram* (constantly) and *kāla* (time). These words from the verse also indicate the necessity of a highly disciplined life (*tapas*), a mastery

over the senses (*brahmacarya*), self-knowledge (*vidyā*) and a firm conviction (*śraddhā*) in the efficacy and the genuineness of the pursuit undertaken.

### HOW LONG THE *SAMĀDHIS* ARE TO BE PRACTISED?

It is natural for the *mumukṣu* (spiritual seeker) to be eager to know how long these *samādhis* are to be practised. Ādi Śaṅkarācārya has answered the when and how long of this practice.

उत्थाने वाप्यनुत्थानेऽप्यप्रमत्तो जितेन्द्रियः ।  
समाधिषट्कं कुर्वीत सर्वदा प्रयतो यतिः ॥

"The zealous *sannyāsī/mumukṣu* who is careful and has conquered passions has to practise the six *samādhis* always while sitting or also otherwise" (*S. V.S.S.S.* 900).

विपरीतार्थधीर्यावन्न निःशेषं निवर्तते ।  
स्वरूपस्फुरणं यावन्न प्रसिध्यत्यनिर्गलम् ।  
तावत्समाधिषट्केन नयेत्कालं निरन्तरम् ॥

"The *mumukṣu* has to spend constantly the time in the practice of six *samādhis*, before the contrary notion (about oneself and the world) totally ceases and the steady or unobstructed knowledge of one's true nature is accomplished" (*S. V.S.S.S.* 901).

### OBSTACLES IN THE CONTEMPLATION/*SAMĀDHI*

While practising contemplation (*nididhyāsana*) and the resultant *samādhis* thereof, the contemplator will inevitably face many obstacles. These are absence of appreciation of the contemplated

(*anusandhānarāhityam*), laziness (*ālasyam*), hankering for sense pleasure (*bhogalālasam*), some sort of fear of losing one's identity (*bhayam*), sleep (*tamaḥ*), agitations (*vikṣepaḥ*), a void or dejection born of absence of progress (*śūnyatā*) etc. All these have to be overcome on the strength of knowledge supplemented by consistent efforts and due discrimination without giving any room to despair. The thirteen essential steps in this pursuit mentioned earlier can serve as a check-list to detect one's deficiencies so as to mend them. A prayerful attitude imbued with devotion to *Īśvara* - the Creator principle - can also be immensely helpful to the contemplator at every stage of progress.

## THE RESULT OF THIS PURSUIT

The final result that is accomplished by this pursuit of directly cognising the true nature of oneself - identical with the ultimate truth and the basis of the entire Creation - is described in the next two verses.

देहाभिमाने गलिते विज्ञाते परमात्मनि ।

यत्र यत्र मनो याति तत्र तत्र समाधयः ॥३०॥

*dehābhimāne galite vijñāte paramātmāni*

*yatra yatra mano yāti tatra tatra samādhayaḥ* - (30)

देहाभिमाने गलिते - when the identification with the body disappears (i.e. is removed) परमात्मनि विज्ञाते - when Brahman is clearly known यत्र यत्र - wherever मनः - the mind याति - goes तत्र तत्र - there समाधयः - *samādhis* (the absorption of mind in Brahman) (स्वयमेव भवन्ति - occur effortlessly). - (30)

30. Wherever the mind goes there occur *samādhis* effortlessly when the identification with the body disappears and Brahman is clearly known (*S.R.U.* 66).

The entire pursuit began with the investigation into the nature of true "I" on the guidelines of *dṛk-dṛśya-viveka*. In the first seventeen verses, the true "I" (*ātmā*) was ascertained as self-evident cognitive principle/pure awareness called *sākṣī*. Then its false status of being a *saṃsārī* - miserable individual - was shown to be the outcome of mutual superimposition between the embodiment and the true "I" effected by the veiling power of *māyā*. By fixing the true "I" (*ātmā*) in *sākṣī*, *dehābhimāna*, i.e. the erroneous notion of "I" in the embodiment, at different levels from ego to the gross body which creates errors such as "I am a human, I am doer (*kartā*), I am experiencer (*bhoktā*), I am happy (*sukhī*), I am sorrowful (*dukhī*) etc." has to be removed totally. The habitual error of identifying true "I" with the body, senses and *antaḥkaraṇa* (inner instrument) can be overcome by the practice of the three types of internal *samādhi*.

In verses 18 to 21 the ascertainment of Brahman - the ultimate truth - as the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the entire Creation, was effected through *Brahma-sarga-viveka*. Therein, the name (*nāma*) and form (*rūpa*) are disregarded by focusing the attention on *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda* aspects inherent in everything that constitutes the Creation at all levels. Based on the clear cognition of Brahman - *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda* - also called *Paramātmā* the falsity of the world is exposed. The habitual notions that ascribe reality to the world obstructing the clear knowledge of *Paramātmā* (Brahman) are dispelled by the practice of the three types of external *samādhi*.

Once the identification of "I" with body is completely eliminated and very clear knowledge of Brahman (*Paramātmā*) attained, the *mumukṣu* - the spiritual seeker - is able to appreciate the true "I" (*ātmā*) identical with Brahman, at all places and all times. The second line of this verse describes how such a person in and through the world, recognizes Brahman only. Wherever the mind goes either withdrawn internally or drawn externally, there is only the absorption of it (i.e. *samādhi*) in the ultimate truth, Brahman. Corresponding to this verse, in the *mantra* of *Sarasvatī-Rahasyopaniṣad* we find the word *Parāmṛtam* - Brahman - in place of *samādhayaḥ*. Both words reveal the recognition of one and the same ultimate truth. To an ignorant person, wherever the mind goes, there is only the world of delusive hopes or plans, whereas to the well accomplished one as described here, the same world is nothing but absolute happiness - Brahman. This is the final stage of persistent and unobstructed abidance in the knowledge of oneself/Brahman without any effort. Till then the means like *śravaṇa* (self-inquiry), *manana* (reflection) and *nididhyāsana* (contemplation) leading to six types of *samādhi*, have to be pursued individually or collectively as the need be.

The great sage Vyāsa in his *Brahma-sūtras* - aphorisms on the inquiry into the nature of Brahman - has devoted two aphorisms (*sūtras*) to highlight the need to practise repeated *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*. They are as follows:

i) आवृत्तिसकृदुपदेशात् ।

"Repetition is necessary, since the *Upaniṣads* instruct repeatedly" (*Br.Sū.* 4-1-1).

ii) लिङ्गाच्च ।

"And (this is so) on account of the evidence (in the *Upaniṣad*)" (*Br.Sū.* 4-1-2).

Ādī Śaṅkarācārya while commenting on the second aphorism (*sūtra*) makes clear distinction between a person who needs repetition and the one who does not.

"..... भवेदावृत्त्यानर्थक्यं तं प्रति यस्तत्त्वमसीति सकृदुक्तमेव ब्रह्मात्मत्वमनुभवितुं शक्नुयात् । यस्तु न शक्नोति तं प्रत्युपयुज्यत एवावृत्तिः । ..... सर्वदुःखविनिर्मुक्तैकचैतन्यात्मकोऽहमित्येष आत्मानुभवः । न चैवमात्मानमनुभवतः किञ्चिदन्यत्कृत्यमवशिष्यते । ..... यस्य तु नैषोऽनुभवो द्रागिव जायते तं प्रत्यनुभवार्थ एवावृत्त्यभ्युपगमः ।"

" .... Repetition becomes redundant for the person who can experience *ātmā* (the true 'I') as Brahman on being taught only once: "You are that Brahman". But for the one who cannot experience so, repetition is indispensable. ....'I am the non-dual pure awareness (*caitanya*) free from all sorrows', is the experience of true 'I' (*ātmānubhava*). For the person who experiences *ātmā* (true 'I') thus, there is no other duty - the thing to be practised - left over. .... The repetition is accepted only for gaining such an experience in the case of the person for whom this experience is not born quite instantly" (*Br.Sū. bhāṣya*; 4-1-2).

Incidentally, the above comments establish that the finale of *ātmajñāna/Brahma-jñāna* (self-knowledge) is such an experience in conformity with the true nature of oneself/Brahman. There is also a mention of this fact in the commentary on the second *Brahma-sūtra* (aphorism) from the first chapter (*Br.Sū.* 1-1-2). While drawing the contrast between the nature of *pramāṇa* (i.e. means of knowledge) needed for rituals and for undertaking inquiry into Brahman, in

addition to *Śruti* (the Veda) reasoning etc. to the extent necessary, the role of experience (*anubhava*) as *pramāṇa* is also accepted towards knowing Brahman. Ādi Śaṅkarācārya justifies this by pointing out the nature of *Brahma-jñāna* (the knowledge of Brahman) as follows:

“.... अनुभवावसानत्वाद्भूतवस्तुविषयत्वाच्च ब्रह्मज्ञानस्य ।”

“(It is so) because *Brahma-jñāna* (the knowledge of Brahman) culminates in experience and it is centred on the existing thing” (*Br.Sū. bhāṣya* 1-1-2).

It is universally known that the knowledge of a given thing is the cognition thereof in strict conformity with its nature. So the knower has no option to fancy the thing otherwise.

The description of the result of such knowledge is continued further.

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिच्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।

क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन्दृष्टे परावरे ॥३१॥

*bhidhate hṛdayagranthicchidyante sarvasaṃśayāḥ*

*kṣīyante cāsyā karmāṇi tasmin dṛṣṭe parāvare - (31)*

तस्मिन् परावरे दृष्टे - when the Brahman that is both cause and the manifest Creation is clearly known अस्य - of this person (i.e. knower's) हृदयग्रन्थिः - the desire(s) भिद्यते - is (are) destroyed सर्वसंशयाः - all doubts छिद्यन्ते - are dispelled च - and कर्माणि - the results of actions क्षीयन्ते - get terminated. - (31)

31. When the Brahman that is both the cause and the manifest Creation is clearly known, the knower's desires are destroyed, all doubts are dispelled and the results of actions get terminated (*S.R.U.* 67, and also *Mu.U.* 2-2-8).

*Tasmin Parāvare dṛṣṭe* - when *parāvaram* Brahman is clearly known:

This phrase is derived from *tat parāvaram*. *Tat* - that - stands for Brahman, totally free from *saṃsāra*. The nature of Brahman is further described by *parāvara*. In general the one who is *para* (absolute/the highest/chief/final/transcendent) and also *avara* (relative/ unimportant/secondary/posterior/immanent) is *parāvaram*. This word can be viewed in more than one way depending on how the specific meanings of both the words are considered. But in every context it describes the nature of Brahman from varied angles. The relevant meanings of *parāvara* are as follows:

- i) *Para* is the absolute cause, the basis of the world whereas *avara* indicates the superimposed relative Creation. The same Brahman appears as both the cause and effect. So, it is called *parāvaram*.
- ii) *Paramātmā* of the nature *sat, cit, ānanda*, being the basis of the Creation is called *para*. The basis of the individual (*jīva*) called *sākṣī* is *avara*. Therefore *parāvara* is Brahman identical with the true "I" at the individual level.
- iii) *Īśvara* - the Creator - is *para* and *saṃsārī jīva* (the individual) is *avara*. The one and the same Brahman appears as both *para* and *avara* in this sense. Therefore Brahman is *parāvara*.



The following are the results that ensue when the clear knowledge (*aparokṣa jñāna*) of *parāvaram* Brahman is gained (i.e. *dr̥ṣṭe*):

a) *Hṛdaya-granthiḥ bhidyate* - Desires are destroyed:

Anything that binds the individual (*jīva*) to *saṃsāra* or grieves the heart is called *hṛdaya-granthiḥ*. Self-ignorance (*avidyā*), desire (*kāma*) and actions or their results (*karma*) that serve as the causes of bondage at different stages are so called. Yet, a specific mention of *hṛdaya-granthi* as connoting desires is incorporated in this commentary because the elimination of self-ignorance (*avidyā*) is already accounted in the wake of knowledge (i.e. *tasmin parāvare dr̥ṣṭe*) and the termination of *karmas* is separately told in this verse. Literally *granthi* means the perversion of truth, falsehood or a knot. The following derivations of *hṛdaya-granthi* will clarify this fact:

- i) *Hṛd* is *ahankāra* - the erroneous "I" notion called ego. *Ayam* refers to the true "I" - pure awareness (*caitanya*) called *sākṣī*. Due to mutual superimposition caused by self-ignorance - or what is called the veiling power of *māyā* - there is an identification between *hṛd* and *ayam*. The one is taken for the other. The doership (*kartṛtva*) belonging to *ahankāra* (ego) is superimposed on *sākṣī* the true "I", and the sentiency of *sākṣī* on inert ego (*ahankāra*). Thus the mutual identification indicated by these two words put together as *hṛdayam* functions as though it is a knot (*granthi*) that fastens up both of them.
- ii) The identification between *hṛd* (*ahankāra*) and *ayam* (*sākṣī*)

itself is *hṛdaya-granthi* - a perversion of truth about both of them - as they cannot be identical.

- iii) *Hṛd* can also mean the true "I" (*sākṣī/ātmā*) and *ayam* can refer to this body (*dehaḥ*). Not knowing the true "I" the error of taking the body as "I" is signified by *hṛdayam*. Actually this is a falsehood (*granthi*) or perversion of truth.

On knowing directly one's true nature as Brahman, *hṛdaya-granthi* is totally destroyed. *Hṛdaya-granthi* is the self-ignorance including its effects of erroneous identification as described earlier and the desires.

- b) *Sarva-saṃśayāḥ chidyante* - All doubts are dispelled:

The mind is a Pandora's box having perennial doubts. This state persists till self-knowledge is gained. The prominent doubts arising during the pursuit of knowing our true nature, and that of the Creation are as under:

"Am I in reality, Brahman?"; "Though I am Brahman, have I its direct knowledge?"; "Even when I know I am Brahman, are there any duties required for me to undertake?"; "In spite of no duty to be discharged, now while living am I a liberated person (i.e. *jīvanmuktaḥ*)?"; "Though liberated here, will I get or not the liberation hereafter (i.e. *videha-mukti*) once this body dies?"; "Even if the liberation hereafter (*videha-mukti*) is ensured, will I be born again after a long period of time?".

However all these and other similar doubts are totally dispelled when the clear knowledge of oneself is gained. They disappear just like the darkness of night at sunrise.

c) *Karmāṇi kṣīyante* - Results of actions get terminated :

The results of actions (*karmaphala* or also called *karma*) can yield future births provided the ego or the erroneous identification with the embodiment (*ahaṅkāra*) persists. On gaining the knowledge of Brahman as the true "I", the ego (*ahaṅkāra*) born of self-ignorance gets extinct. So the results of actions are incapable of generating afresh further embodiments. The results of actions are of three types:

i) *Sañcita karma* - Accumulated results of past actions :

*Karmas* (results of actions) - good and bad - from past innumerable births, standing in the account of a given individual without producing their effects so far, are called *sañcita* or *anārabdha karmas*. They have the potential to produce countless future births. When the knowledge is gained, these *sañcita karmas* get totally destroyed like the well lit fire reducing the fuel to ashes.

ii) *Prārabdha karma* - The results of actions which have already begun their effect :

The present embodiment is produced by these. At the time of birth of this body, self-knowledge was yet to be born. Therefore *prārabdha karma*, unaffected by the knowledge of self acquired later, continues its function. That is why even after gaining self-knowledge we find the continuation of the body until the momentum for it of *prārabdha karma* gets over.

iii) *Āgāmī karma* - Future results of actions :

In the present context, the results born of actions performed after the birth of self-knowledge are called *āgāmī karma*. They have the potential to yield their results to the doer (*kartā*) in future. However, a *jñānī* - the person who knows Brahman/ātmā - has no ego (*ahaṅkāra*) and the consequent notion of doership (*kartṛtva*). As a result, *āgāmī karma* cannot have any bearing on a *jñānī*.

In view of such behaviour of these three kinds of *karmas*, the word *karmāṇi* from this verse is applicable only to *sañcita karma*. This understanding is of the people in general who see a *jñānī* (the person of knowledge) as still interacting with the world like any common person. But the comprehension of the person who knows Brahman is entirely different. *Prārabdha karmas* may concern the embodiment and not the true "I" (*ātmā*). To *jñānī* whose "I" is rooted in its true nature, viz. the bodiless (*aśarīra*) *ātmā* (pure awareness/*caitanya*), there is no *prārabdha karma* even. *Āgāmī* as shown earlier cannot have any locus after the person has got self-knowledge. In other words from *jñānī's* standpoint, the word *karmāṇi* from this verse applies to all *karmas* whether begun (*prārabdha*) or not (i.e. *anārabdha* - *sañcita* and *āgāmī*).

All these three-fold results occur at the time of gaining clear knowledge itself and not in future. There is no good or bad mode of death for the person who has self-knowledge. Being already liberated when self-knowledge took place, it does not make any difference to a *jñānī* even if the death occurs in the state of coma.

The present verse is the penultimate *mantra* of *Sarasvatī-Rahasyopaniṣad*. It is also one of the verses in *Mundakopaniṣad* (2-2-8). With this verse, the *mantras* quoted from *Sarasvatī-Rahasyopaniṣad* in this text come to an end. Verses 22 to 29

provide us with the necessary practical details about the means of eliminating the contrary notions (*viparyāya*) with reference to the true "I" (*ātmā*) and Brahman. To have the unobstructed self-knowledge, the repetition (*abhyāsa*) of contemplation (*nididhyāsana*) is totally necessary. Any laxity in efforts needs to be overcome, keeping in sight the goal of achieving unique and indispensable result.

# THE INDIVIDUAL (*JĪVA*) AND THE WORLD (*JAGAT*) ARE FALSE (*MITHYĀ*)

## THE RELEVANCE OF THE REMAINING TEXTUAL PORTION

Prior to the description of the six kinds of *samādhī*, *dr̥k-dr̥śya-viveka* (the investigation of the cogniser and the cognised) and *Brahma-sarga-viveka* (the discrimination between Brahman and the Creation) had ascertained the precise nature of true "I" (*sākṣī*) and Brahman. The following passing references substantiate by implication the conclusion that the *saṃsārī* individual (*jīva*) and the world (*sarga/sṛṣṭi*) are false (*mithyā*) - not true even though we perceive them or experience them.

- i) The status of individuality (*jīvatvam*) appears in *sākṣī* (the true "I"/pure awareness) on account of the superimposition (*āropāt*) effected by the veiling power (*āvaraṇa śakti*) of *māyā* - the Creative power - (verse 17). So the individual (*jīva*) has to be false.
- ii) The Creation (*sṛṣṭi*) is the expansion (i.e. manifestation) of names (*nāma*) and forms (*rūpa*) in Brahman as the foam or waves are to the ocean (verse 14). Brahman is non-dual (*advaya*). The change (*vikāra*) is only in the Creation (*sarga*) and not in Brahman (verse 19). Brahman appears to get modified (*vikārī*) in nature by the influence of the veiling power (verse 18). This makes the world necessarily a false one. The illustration of foam or waves arising in the ocean helps to clarify this point.

- iii) The individuality (*jīvatvam*) and the Creation disappear once the veiling (*āvr̥ti/āvaraṇa*) is destroyed (verses 17 and 19). This shows that *sākṣi* (the true "I") is identical with Brahman and this is the ultimate truth (*satyam*) whereas the transient individual (*jīva*) and the world (*jagat*) are false.

Such a false nature of *jīva* and *jagat* is very clear to a person whose mind can get absorbed in Brahman anywhere and everywhere as described in verse 30. To others who are still on the path of accomplishing the goal, and to those to whom the vivid experiences of the world impress as real on their mind, the entities of *jīva* and *jagat* truly exist. It is very difficult for them to understand the false nature of the individual (*jīva*) and the world (*jagat*). In view of this major hindrance, the remaining fifteen verses are exclusively devoted to prove in detail with illustrations, the following three aspects:

- a) *Jīva* (the individual) and *jagat* (the world) are superimposed on - falsely attributed to - their basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*), viz. Brahman. Therefore they are false.
- b) They have no independent existence apart from their basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) - Brahman.
- c) On gaining the direct cognition (*aparokṣānubhūti*) of the true nature of *ātmā*/Brahman, both *jīva* and *jagat* having no independent existence, disappear in their basis and what remains is only Brahman.

A close scrutiny of the last *mantra* of *Sarasvatī-Rahasyopaniṣad* can also substantiate the above conclusion. The final *mantra* therein reveals the statuses of *jīva* (the individual) and *Īśvara* - the

Creator - as falsely attributed to Brahman and so they are not real. The status of *Īśvara* is with respect to the Creation (*jagat*). Though the said *Upaniṣad* discusses about *Īśvara* to some extent besides *jīva* and *jagat*, Sri Bhāratitīrtha, the author of the present text - *Dr̥k dr̥śya viveka* - has focussed only on *jīva* and *jagat*. Thus to a great extent, the remaining portion serves as an elaboration of the last *mantra* of this *Upaniṣad* that constitutes the actual basis of this text.

### THREE VERSIONS ABOUT *JĪVA* (THE INDIVIDUAL)

The author proceeds to show the false nature of *jīva* by presenting first the three prevailing concepts about it.

अवच्छिन्नश्चिदाभासस्तृतीयः स्वप्नकल्पितः ।

विज्ञेयस्त्रिविधो जीवस्तत्राद्यः पारमार्थिकः ॥३२॥

*avacchinnaścidābhāsastr̥tīyaḥ svapnakalpitaḥ  
vijñeyastrividho jīvastatrādyāḥ pāramārthikaḥ - (32)*

अवच्छिन्नः - the conditioned/limited/separated/covered (*cit*)  
चिदाभासः - the reflection of *cit* (pure awareness) तृतीयः - the third  
one (is) स्वप्नकल्पितः - imagined as in dream (एवं - thus) जीवः -  
the individual (*jīva*) त्रिविधः - of three kinds विज्ञेयः - (is) to be  
regarded तत्र - among them आद्यः - the first variety पारमार्थिकः -  
is of the nature of Brahman. - (32)

32. The *jīva* (individual) is regarded as of three kinds, viz. the limited *cit* (pure awareness), the reflection of *cit*, and the one imagined as in dream. Among them the first variety is of the nature of Brahman.



Based on three different aspects of superimposition between *cit/sākṣī* (pure awareness) and the embodiment, there are three concepts about *jīva* in vogue as follows:

- i) *Avacchinnah* (limited) or also called *paricchinnah* (covered):

Literally *avacchinnah* means limited, conditioned or separated. The non-dual Brahman is all-pervasive pure awareness (*caitanya*) and cannot be limited by anything, nor can there be possibility of any division in it. Yet, the self-ignorance and the consequent identification with the body (i.e. *ahaṅkāra*) appears to limit *sākṣī caitanya*, i.e. the Brahman as the knowledge principle available at the individual embodiment level. Thereby *sākṣī caitanya* with the erroneously superimposed features of the bodies gives a semblance of being limited or separated from Brahman. It is like the space inside the pot appearing as if limited and separated by the pot from the total space, when in reality space, as everyone knows, cannot be limited. In spite of this fact the space seen in the pot is taken as limited pot space, having specific dimensions. Similarly *sākṣī caitanya* (pure awareness) at the level of an individual embodiment due to the limitations effected by self-ignorance, *ahaṅkāra* (ego) and the body, is considered as *jīva*. This is the first concept called *avacchinnah* regarding what is *jīva*.

- ii) *Cidābhāsaḥ* - The reflection of pure awareness :

That which is not the actual *cit* (pure awareness), but appears like *cit* at an individual level is *cidābhāsaḥ*. It is like seeing one's face (*mukha*) in the mirror. What one sees in the mirror is not one's face though it looks exactly so. It is called *mukhābhāsa* - semblance of face. Similarly

the reflection of *cit/caitanya* (pure awareness) available in the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) - *linga-śarīra* - is called *cidābhāsaḥ*. Some consider *cidābhāsaḥ* - the reflection of pure awareness - itself as *jīva*. This is the second version about what is considered as *jīva*.

iii) *Svapnakalpitaḥ* - The one who is imagined as in dream :

The dreamer takes unto oneself the various embodiments like human, bird, animal etc. in the dream and enacts therein. But it is only a mental projection because on waking, it is not there and the waker is the reality for the dreamer. In a similar manner the one who is imagined as an individual like the dreamer, is the third view about the nature of *jīva* called *svapnakalpitaḥ*.

#### THE CORRECT UNDERSTANDING OF *JĪVA* (THE INDIVIDUAL)

The above-mentioned three versions of *jīva* do describe different facets of an individual. The author has preference for the first view. The reason for it is given in the last quarter of this verse. Among those (*tatra*) three views the first one, viz. *avacchinnaḥ* - *sākṣī* who appears as limited - is of the nature of Brahman (*pāramārthikaḥ*). This is substantiated in verse 34.

One may wonder how the limited individual (*jīva*) can be the limitless Brahman. By describing the actual nature of *jīva*, it is shown now that the status of *jīva* is on account of false superimposition of embodiment whereas its true nature is nothing but Brahman.

अवच्छेदः कल्पितः स्यादवच्छेद्यं तु वास्तवम् ।  
तस्मिन् जीवत्वमारोपाद्ब्रह्मत्वं तु स्वभावतः ॥३३॥

*avacchedaḥ kalpitaḥ syādavacchedyaṁ tu vāstavam  
tasmin jīvatvamāropād brahmatvaṁ tu svabhāvataḥ - (33)*

अवच्छेदः - limitation कल्पितः - falsely superimposed स्यात् - is  
अवच्छेद्यं - the one that is subjected to limitation, viz. *sākṣī* (pure  
awareness) तु - but वास्तवम् - the truth (स्यात् - is) तस्मिन् - in that  
(*sākṣī*) आरोपात् - due to mutual superimposition जीवत्वम् - the  
status of *jīva* स्यात् - occurs तु - whereas ब्रह्मत्वं - the nature of  
Brahman स्वभावतः - on account of innateness (स्यात् - is). - (33)

33. The limitation is falsely superimposed, but the *sākṣī* (pure awareness) that is subjected to limitation is the truth. (Therefore) the status of *sākṣī* as *jīva* occurs due to mutual superimposition whereas its nature as Brahman is on account of innateness.

The limitations exercised by self-ignorance (*avidyā*) and the ego (*ahaṅkāra*) in *sākṣī* (pure awareness) whose nature is Brahman are as false as the appearance of the blue canopy of the sky. This can be substantiated from our experience in sleep. *Ahaṅkāra* (ego) is dormant in sleep. So the limitations like "I am covered by ignorance" and "I am limited by *ahaṅkāra*" are absent therein. In contrast to this, the *sākṣī* that appears to be limited by ignorance (*avidyā*) and *ahaṅkāra* (ego), continues to exist immutably in the three states of consciousness. That proves the nature of *sākṣī* as ever-existing truth (*vāstavam*). This being so, the status of *jīva* superimposed on *sākṣī* (pure awareness/the true "I") by false limitations is equally false. It is effected by the mutual

superimposition between *sākṣī* and *ahaṅkāra* (ego) through the medium of unreal *cidābhāsaḥ* - reflection of pure awareness. In another text called *Pañcadaśī*, the same author Śrī Bhāratīrtha describes how this mutual superimposition exactly occurs.

कर्तृत्वादीन्बुद्धिधर्मान् स्फूर्त्याख्यां चात्मरूपताम् ।  
दधद्विभाति पुरत आभासोऽतो भ्रमो भवेत् ।

"The reflection of *cit* (pure awareness) manifests by assuming the features of *antaḥkaraṇa* (inner instrument) like doership (*kartṛtva*) etc. and the nature of *ātmā* called cognitive principle. Therefore it (*cidābhāsa*) is a misapprehension" (P. 8-52).

*Sākṣī* (pure awareness) by its innate nature is Brahman itself. *Sākṣī* is not transformed into Brahman by way of any action. But the erroneous notion that *sākṣī* is *jīva* is dispelled by knowing true nature of *jīva*. It is like the pot space never being different from the total space. A person lacking discrimination may mistake the pot space as limited or discontinuous from the total space. Yet it never undergoes such change in reality to become pot space.

The word *tu* - but/whereas - occurs twice in the verse. It is either to draw the contrast of limited *jīva* with Brahman that appears as if limited or to emphasise what is told therein.

Based on reasoning it was shown that *sākṣī* (pure awareness) appears as if it is a *jīva*, but not in reality. This is brought about on account of limitations imposed by *cidābhāsa* (reflection of pure awareness) and *ahaṅkāra* (ego), the product of ignorance. In reality *jīva* (individual) is Brahman itself. This fact is now corroborated by

pointing out the *Upaniṣadic* statements revealing the identity of *jīva* and Brahman. They do so only with respect to *jīva* considered as *avacchinnaḥ* (limited) and not in the case of the other two.

अवच्छिन्नस्य जीवस्य पूर्णेन ब्रह्मणैकताम् ।  
तत्त्वमस्यादिवाक्यानि जगुर्नेतरजीवयोः ॥३४॥

*avacchinnaṣya jīvasya pūrṇena brahmaṇaikatām  
tattvamasyādivākyaṇi jagurnetara-jīvayoḥ - (34)*

तत्त्वमस्यादिवाक्यानि - the statements "*Tat tvam asi* - you are that Brahman." etc. अवच्छिन्नस्य - of the one who is limited जीवस्य - of *jīva* पूर्णेन ब्रह्मणा - with the indivisible (full) Brahman एकताम् - identity जगुः - declare (तु - but) इतरजीवयोः - of the other two *jīvas* न - not. - (34)

34. The (*Upaniṣadic*) statements "*Tat tvam asi* - you are that Brahman" etc. declare the identity of limited *sākṣī* (pure awareness) (mistaken) as *jīva* with the indivisible/full Brahman, but not of the other two *jīvas*.

The word *tvam* - you - in the said statement refers to the one limited by ignorance (*avidyā*) and *ahaṅkāra* (ego), who as a result, appears as if distinct from Brahman. *Avacchinnaḥ* and *pāramārthikaḥ* are the two terms used for such a *jīva* (in verse 32). Brahman free from all the limitations due to considerations of space, time and objects is meant by *tat* - that - in the statement. *Asi* - (you) are - therein reveals the identity of this limited (*avacchinnaḥ*) *jīva* and Brahman. Other statements like "*Ahaṁ Brahmāsmi* - I am Brahman", "*Ayamātmā Brahma* - this *ātmā* is Brahman", "*Prajñānam Brahma* - the cognitive principle, pure

awareness is Brahman" etc. also reveal the same identity. Though the words have no direct access - reference - to Brahman/*ātmā*, these statements having recourse to superimposed things, confer self-knowledge through an implied sense or indirectly.

Such statements are called *mahāvākyas*. They cannot establish the identity of Brahman with *jīvas* when the nature of *jīva* is viewed through the second or the third concept, viz. *jīva* is *cidābhāsaḥ* (the reflection of pure awareness) or *jīva* is *svapnakalpitaḥ* (the one who is imagined as in dream). *Jīvas* described in these two concepts do not have any true independent locus on their own. Both of them are the products of *māyā* - the Creative power. *Māyā* being false, they also remain false having no true locus. The true locus can be pinned down only in *sākṣī*, incorporated in the first concept on the nature of *jīva* called *avacchinnaḥ* and not in the later two.

Some persons may raise a very subtle doubt in this context. Any given knowledge belongs to a knower. To gain knowledge is to acquire a new status of becoming the knower. This is possible only for a changing entity (*vikārī*). So the doubt can be stated as follows:

Knowledge as "I am Brahman (*aham Brahmāsmi*)" is gained by *cidābhāsa* (the reflection of pure awareness/*cit*). Thereby the status of being knower should legitimately belong to *cidābhāsa* and not to the unchanging (*avikārī*) *sākṣī* (pure awareness). By its unchanging nature, *sākṣī* cannot be the knower of Brahman. The result gained by one cannot be ascribed to another is a rule. Therefore the knowledge of Brahman cannot belong to *sākṣī*. As a result, the *jīva* seen of the nature through first concept, viz. *avacchinnaḥ* cannot know its identity with Brahman.

But this is not a flaw. *Cidābhāsa* is based on *sākṣī*. It has no existence apart from *sākṣī*. *Cidābhāsa* is a product of inexplicable *māyā* (the Creative power) which is false in nature. *Māyā* cannot exist on its own and therefore *cidābhāsa* cannot be the locus of such a knowledge. As for *sākṣī* (pure awareness) the following points hold good:

- i) *Sākṣī* is the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of *cidābhāsa*.
- ii) Therefore *sākṣī* is the true nature of *cidābhāsa*.
- iii) *Sākṣī* is also the ultimate truth.

So the acquisition of knowledge can be attributed to *sākṣī* secondarily, while dealing in the realm of relative. It cannot be ascribed to *cidābhāsa* which in reality is non-existent entity. For further elaboration on this topic, the reader may refer to *Upadeśasāhasri* (18-107/108) and *Pañcadaśī* (7-14/15).

**JĪVA AND JAGAT ARE PRODUCTS OF MĀYĀ AND THEIR BASIS IS SĀKṢĪ IDENTICAL WITH BRAHMAN**

It was shown in the last two verses: *sākṣī* appears as limited *jīva* and it is identical with Brahman. The same *sākṣī* who is Brahman forms the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of *jīva* (the individual) and *jagat* (the world). Both *jīva* and *jagat* are the products of *māyā* - the Creative power. In fact this topic has already been dealt with in verse 13. Yet, taking into account the difficulty in comprehending this subject and the importance of these aspects in the present discussion, it has been restated in the next verse in different words.

ब्रह्मण्यवस्थिता माया विक्षेपाऽऽवृतिरूपिणी ।  
आवृत्याऽखण्डतां तस्मिन् जगज्जीवौ प्रकल्पयेत् ॥३५॥

*brahmanyavasthitā māyā vikṣepāvṛtirūpiṇī  
avṛtyākhaṇḍatām tasmin jagajjīvau prakalpayet - (35)*

विक्षेपाऽऽवृतिरूपिणी - the one characterised by projecting (creating) and veiling powers माया - *māyā* (the Creative power) ब्रह्मणि - in Brahman अवस्थिता - abides (सा - that *māyā* ब्रह्मणः- of Brahman) अखण्डतां - of indivisible/non-dual nature आवृत्य - having covered तस्मिन् - in that (Brahman) जगज्जीवौ - the world and *jīva* (individual) प्रकल्पयेत् - creates. - (35)

35. *Māyā* characterised by projecting and veiling powers abides in Brahman. *Māyā* after having covered the non-dual nature of Brahman, creates in Brahman the world and *jīva*.

In reality, the Creation (*jagat*) cannot be in non-dual Brahman. The word *akhaṇḍatā* - of indivisible nature - indicates Brahman as all-pervasive and non-dual. In spite of this *māyā* brings about a vivid appearance of the world (*jagat*) which though false appears real to all ignorant people. The commentary on verse 13 can be referred to for further details.

## FEATURES OF *JĪVA* (THE INDIVIDUAL) AND *JAGAT* (THE WORLD)

Between the experiencer *jīva* and the experienceable *jagat*, *jīva* is primary and *jagat* (the world) is secondary, as the world is created for the sake of *jīva*. Their distinct features are now described so as to determine their false nature.

जीवो धीस्थश्चिदाभासो भवेद्भोक्ता हि कर्मकृत् ।  
भोग्यरूपमिदं सर्वं जगत्स्याद्भूतभौतिकम् ॥ ३६ ॥



*jīvo dhīsthaścīdābhāso bhaved bhoktā hi karmakṛt  
bhogyā-rūpamidaṃ sarvaṃ jagat-syād bhūtabhautikam - (36)*

हि - because धीस्थः - identified with *antaḥkaraṇa* (inner instrument) चिदाभासः - the reflection of pure awareness (*cit*) कर्मकृत् - the doer of all actions भोक्ता - the experiencer (च - and तस्मात् - therefore) जीवः - *jīva* भवेत् - is इदम् - this cognised सर्व - all भूतभौतिकम् - the five elements and the embodiments भोग्यरूपम् - of the nature of experienceable things जगत् - the world स्यात् - is. - (36)

36. The reflection of pure awareness (i.e. *cidābhāsa*) identified with *antaḥkaraṇa* (inner instrument) is *jīva* because it is the doer of all actions and the experiencer (of the world). All the cognised five elements and the experienceable embodiments and things constitute the world.

The one who does all the actions (*karmas*), both as per scriptures, e.g. rituals, meditations, sacrifices, self-inquiry and as required to be in the society, i.e. worldly such as earning the livelihood, spending the money, eating, sporting etc., is *karmakṛt*. The experiencer here or hereafter of results of one's own actions, is called *bhoktā*. Neither *sākṣī* (pure awareness) being free from the embodiment nor the body being inert can act or experience something belonging to this world on their own. It is the reflection of pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) due to self-ignorance, identified with *antaḥkaraṇa* (inner instrument) which can accomplish both these feats. This peculiar entity born of self-ignorance leading to mutual false superimposition is *jīva*. The existence of *cidābhāsa* - reflection of *cit* - is possible because *antaḥkaraṇa* is present. *Antaḥkaraṇa* itself is the product of *māyā* dependent on Brahman. This establishes that *jīva* as understood through the foregoing

deliberation is a false projection effected by the equally false *māyā*.

*Bhūtam* means the five elements, viz. earth, water, fire, air and space. *Bhautikam* comprises all varied embodiments and sense objects existing in the Creation. They are constituted of five elements. The embodiments serve as abodes for different *jīvas* to, undergo their due experiences. In general these *bhūtam* and *bhautikam* together as perceived in the world provide a field of experience as deserved by *jīvas* (the individuals) as results seen in present through their past actions. That which is worthy of experience in this manner is called *bhogyam*. The five elements, all the embodiments and the things experienced together constitute *jagat* - the world.

### *JĪVA AND JAGAT ARE FALSE*

*Jīva* and *jagat* of the nature described so far, both being the products of false *māyā*, cease to exist in the state of liberation. They continue to be present in the empirical sense during their tenure in the realm of self-ignorance. Therefore *jīva* and *jagat* get reduced to only empirical or transactional reality. This fact is now pointed out to reaffirm their false nature.

अनादिकालमारभ्य मोक्षात्पूर्वमिदं द्वयम् ।

व्यवहारे स्थितं तस्मादुभयं व्यावहारिकम् ॥३७॥

*anādikālamārabhya mokṣātpūrvamidaṁ dvayam*  
*vyavahāre sthitaṁ tasmādubhayaṁ vyāvahārikam - (37)*

इदं - this द्वयम् - pair (of *jīva* and *jagat*) अनादिकालम् आरभ्य -  
ever since the beginningless time मोक्षात् पूर्वम् - before the

incorporeal/bodiless liberation व्यवहारे स्थितं - exists  
empirically/transactionally तस्मात् - therefore उभयं - both  
व्यावहारिकम् - (are) empirical (in nature). - (37)

37. This pair of *jīva* and *jagat* exists empirically ever since the beginningless time before the *videha mukti* - liberation from any further embodiments. Therefore both are empirical in nature.

No one can establish when *jīva* and *jagat* came into existence since both their cause *māyā* and the basis (*adhisthāna*) Brahman themselves are beginningless. Lord Kṛṣṇa states in *Bhagavadgītā* that both *prakṛti* (*māyā*) and *Puruṣa* (Brahman) are beginningless (*B.G.* 13-19). Once the body of a *jnani* dies, that specific *jīva* (individual) existing hitherto and its *jagat* continue no more. This is what is called *videha mukti* indicated by the word *mokṣa* - liberation - in this verse. This is in contrast to *jīvan-mukti* - liberation from *samsāra* or state of *jīvahood* and clutches of *jagat* while living. After gaining self-knowledge until the body of that person - a *jīvan-mukta* - ends, the state of *jīva* and *jagat* do not exist any longer in reality for him or her. However, they continue to be in a sublated (*bādhita*) sense.

*Vyavahāra* - dealing/transaction - refers to all transactions such as knower (*pramātā*), the means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) and the thing to be known (*prameya*), involving the three separate interacting entities - triple form (*tripuṭi*). *Jīva* and *jagat* can only exist in the realm of such relative connections and dealings. Thereby the nature of *jīva* and *jagat* is a relative one and empirical as stated above. Therefore both *jīva* and *jagat* are referred to as *vyāvahārika* - belonging to *vyavahāra* (dealing/transaction). The word *vyāvahārika* excludes both *jīva* and *jagat* from being

*pāramārthika* - the one having absolute existence - and also precludes from being *prātibhāsika* - subjective in nature, i.e. existing only in appearance without being substantiated by concrete external perceptible reality like the objects in dream.

In verse 35 it was clearly told, "*Sākṣi*, identical with Brahman, is the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of *jīva* along with *jagat* and both *jīva* and *jagat* are the effects of *māyā*". The direct expression in this verse that *jīva* and *jagat* are empirical in nature (*vyāvahārika*) implies that in reality both of them are false (*mithyā*) without any independent existence having their basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) as Brahman. Their existence is of relative and transient nature as they cease to be after the liberation of the individual from their hold in wake of self-knowledge. Only that which exists for ever independently is absolute. Anything other than that is false (*mithyā*) even when it appears to be present during its period of existence. The fact that *jīva* and *jagat* are false (*mithyā*) in nature having Brahman as their basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*), means that they have no independent existence distinct from Brahman. (What remains after they cease to be is only Brahman, being their basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*)). It is universally known that the superimposed (*adhyasta*) thing is always located in its basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) (and after the disappearance of what is superimposed, what remains is only the basis).

## THE EXAMPLE OF *JĪVA* AND *JAGAT* IN DREAM

The content of the preceding three verses is now explained in the next five verses through the illustration of *jīva* and *jagat* as experienced in dream. First of all *jīva* and *jagat* as perceived in dream are shown to be the outcome of the veiling power of deep sleep.

चिदाभासस्थिता निद्रा विक्षेपाऽऽवृतिरूपिणी ।  
आवृत्य जीवजगती पूर्वे नूत्ने तु कल्पयेत् ॥३८॥

*cidābhāsasthitā nidrā vikṣepāḥāvṛtirūpiṇī  
āṇṛtya jīvajagatī pūrve nūtnē tu kalpayet - (38)*

चिदाभासस्थिता - the one who abides in the reflection of pure awareness (*cidābhāsa*) विक्षेपाऽऽवृतिरूपिणी - is of the nature of projecting (creating) and veiling powers निद्रा - sleep पूर्वे - previous (of waking state) जीवजगती - *jīva* and *jagat* आवृत्य - having suppressed नूत्ने - new (*jīva* and *jagat*) तु - in contrast कल्पयेत् - produces. - (38)

38. Sleep abides in *cidābhāsa* (the reflection of pure awareness) and is of the nature of veiling and projecting (creating) powers. Having suppressed *jīva* and *jagat* of waking state, in contrast, it (sleep) produces the new ones.

The main cause of dream is sleep. The impressions registered during the waking state serve as the secondary cause. Sleep wherein there is a total withdrawal from all that is perceived while awake, including the cognition of the body, is necessary for the waking state impressions to produce the dream. The waking state impressions by themselves cannot project dream, in the absence of sleep. If it were not so, dreams will surface in the waking state as the impressions of waking remain active all along.

Sleep is a state wherein the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) is dormant as it resolves into its cause, viz. self-ignorance. What remains there is only the inert ignorance without the usual manifestations of *antaḥkaraṇa*. Yet, we experience this state of not

knowing anything including one's presence at that time in sleep, due to the presence of *cidābhāsa*, operative through the subtle (*sūkṣma*) *vṛttis* (thoughts). This *cidābhāsa* is an essential constituent of the empirical (*vyāvahārika*) *jīva*.

Sleep, by its veiling power (*āvaraṇa śakti*) suppresses the earlier empirical (*vyāvahārika*) *jīva* and *jagat* functioning during the waking state. Thereafter, *cidābhāsa* the location (*āśraya*) of sleep, gets limited by sleep and so it abides in the *nāḍis* - nerves - within the body together with the impressions collected from the waking state experiences. Dreams are produced when the results of actions (*karmaphalas*) capable of producing the subtle experiences of dream are ready to manifest. At such a time, sleep with its projecting (creating) power produces a new *jīva* and *jagat* of dream, in *cidābhāsa* limited by sleep. The dream *jīva* is the dreamer and the dream *jagat* is the dreamt world. The word *tu* - to the contrary - in the verse is to emphasize the contrast between the two kinds of *jīva* and *jagat* as operative in the empirical (*vyāvahārika*) waking state and the subjective (*prātibhāsika*) dream state.

In the light of this illustration, the following parallels can be seen between sleep and *māyā*:

- i) As sleep has its location (*āśraya*) in *cidābhāsa*, so has *māyā* in Brahman.
- ii) Both sleep and *māyā* are endowed with veiling and projecting (creating) powers.
- iii) *Jīva* and *jagat* of dream, i.e. dreamer and the dreamt world are the effects of sleep. Similarly the empirical (*vyāvahārika*) *jīva* and *jagat* are produced by *māyā*.

iv) *Cidābhāsa* limited by sleep is the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of *jīva* and *jagat* belonging to dream. Likewise *sākṣī*, identical with Brahman, limited by *māyā* is the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of empirical (*vyāvahārika*) *jīva* and *jagat*.

Therefore what is told in verse 35 gets verified by this illustration and so it cannot be disputed.

The contrast of *jīva* and *jagat* of dream state with those of waking state is now brought out.

प्रतीतिकाल एवैते स्थितत्वात्प्रातिभासिके ।

न हि स्वप्नप्रबुद्धस्य पुनः स्वप्ने स्थितिस्तयोः ॥३९॥

*pratītikāla evaite sthitatvāt prātibhāsike*

*na hi svapnaprabuddhasya punaḥ svapne sthitistayoḥ - (39)*

एते - these two (*jīva* and *jagat* of dream) प्रतीतिकाले - during the period of (dream) appearance एव - only स्थितत्वात् - on account of (their) existence प्रातिभासिके - subjective (इति उच्येते - thus they are called) हि - because स्वप्नप्रबुद्धस्य - of the person who has woken after seeing a dream स्वप्ने - in (another) dream तयोः - of those two (viz. *jīva* and *jagat* from the preceding dream) पुनः - again स्थितिः - occurrence न - (is) not (there). - (39)

39. On account of their existence only during the period of (dream) appearance, these two (*jīva* and *jagat* of dream) are called subjective in nature; because in (another) dream of the person who has woken after seeing a dream, the occurrence of those two, (viz. *jīva* - dreamer - and *jagat* - dreamt world - from the preceding dream) is not found any more.

*Jīva* and *jagat* in a given dream appear to be there only during that particular dream. They do not exist after the dream ends. The word *eva* - only - negates the existence of *jīva* and *jagat* operative in a given specific dream once that dream is over. Therefore they are subjective in nature.

The same fact is told negatively in the second line of this verse. A person, having undergone a dream, does not experience *jīva* and *jagat* of that dream in another one seen thereafter any time. This shows the subjective (*prātibhāsika*) nature of both dreamer and the dreamt world.

Because the *jīva* and *jagat* of dream are subjective (*prātibhāsika*) they cannot be even empirical (*vyāvahārika*), leave alone their being *pāramārthika* - of the nature of absolute existence. The subjective nature also substantiates the fact that *jīva* and *jagat* of a given dream are false (*mithyā*) because they exist only during the persistence of that single dream and not found in any subsequent one. Similarly existence of empirical (*vyāvahārika*) *jīva* and *jagat* lasting till such time that the bodiless liberation (*videha-mukti*) takes place and not thereafter any more, also demonstrates their false (*mithyā*) nature.

The nature of empirical (*vyāvahārika*) *jīva* and *jagat* told in the verse 37 is substantiated by this illustration. What was told in brief in the previous two verses is further detailed in verses 40 to 42 to give a thorough perspective. The false (*mithyā*) nature of *jīva* and *jagat* of the dream state is expressly highlighted to begin with.

प्रातिभासिकजीवो यस्तज्जगत्प्रातिभासिकम् ।

वास्तवं मन्यतेऽन्यस्तु मिथ्येति व्यावहारिकः ॥४०॥



*prātibhāsika jīvo yastajagat prātibhāsikam  
vāstavaṃ manyatenyastu mithyeti vyāvahārikaḥ - (40)*

यः - the one प्रातिभासिकजीवः - the subjective/dream *jīva*  
(सः - he) तत् - that प्रातिभासिकम् - the subjective/dream जगत् - the  
world वास्तवम् - real मन्यते - considers- तु - whereas अन्यः - the  
other व्यावहारिकः - the empirical (*jīva*) (स्वप्नजीवजगती - the dream  
*jīva* and *jagat*) मिथ्या इति - as false (मन्यते - considers). - (40)

40. The dream *jīva* (dreamer) considers the dream world as real, whereas the other empirical *jīva* (waker) considers both the dream *jīva* and *jagat* (world) as false.

The *jīva* projected in the dream is *prātibhāsika-jīva* (the subjective individual) and the world therein is the *prātibhāsikaṃ jagat* (the subjective world). So long as the dream *jīva* (dreamer) exists, till then the dream *jagat* (the dreamt world) also exists. Therefore the dream *jīva* considers the dream *jagat* as real, and not as false. The word *tu* - whereas - in the verse is meant to show the exclusion of *jīva* and *jagat* of one state from the other state as regards both the waking and dream states.

The dream *jīva* and the dream *jagat* of one dream do not exist prior to the beginning of the concerned dream. After waking up from the dream, they are absent both in the waking state as well as in the subsequent dreams of future. That is what makes the empirical (*vyāvahārika*) *jīva* (waker) not to consider the dreamt *jagat* (world) and its experiencer the dream *jīva* (dreamer) as real, but takes them to be false instead.

The rule laid down in this illustration to ascertain the falsity (*mithyātva*) is now applied to the empirical (*vyāvahārika*) *jīva*

(waker) and *jagat* (waking world) to ascertain the falsity of their nature.

**व्यावहारिकजीवः यस्तज्जगद्व्यावहारिकम् ।**

**सत्यं प्रत्येति मिथ्येति मन्यते पारमार्थिकः ॥४१॥**

*vyāvahārikajīvo yastajjagadvyāvahārikam*

*satyaṃ pratyeti mithyēti manyate pāramārthikaḥ - (41)*

यः - the one व्यावहारिकजीवः - the empirical *jīva* (सः - he)  
तद् - that व्यावहारिकम् - empirical जगत् - the world सत्यं - real  
प्रत्येति - believes पारमार्थिकः (जीवः) - *jñānī* (the person of  
self-knowledge) मिथ्या - false इति - as मन्यते - knows. - (41)

41. The empirical *jīva* (waker) believes the empirical world as real (whereas) *jñānī* (the person having self-knowledge) knows (the empirical *jīva* and the world) as false.

In the previous verse from the view of empirical (*vyāvahārika*) *jīva* the dream *jīva* taking the dreamt world as real was shown to be wrong. But this empirical *jīva* (waker) fares no better than the dream *jīva* (dreamer) when it comes to his/her understanding of the empirical world. The empirical *jīva* (individual) considers the empirical world to be real because it exists all along during his or her existence in the waking state. But this view is erroneous. The falsity of this empirical *jagat* (world) is established in the light of self-knowledge by a *jñānī*.

As will be seen from the next verse, *pāramārthikaḥ* stands for *pāramārthika-jīvaḥ* meaning a person who knows Brahman (*jñānī*). Such a person who has firm abidance (*niṣṭhā*) in Brahman/

self-knowledge is nothing but Brahman. "*Sa yo Brahma veda Brahmaiva bhavati* - the knower of Brahman is truly Brahman" is the declaration of *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* (3-2-8). The title *jīva* refers to a *saṃsāri* individual and hence is a misnomer for a *jñānī* even when qualified by an adjective, viz. *pāramārthikaḥ* - the one who has absolute nature. Yet, there is no alternative than using the word *jīva* secondarily, representing the last tenuous straw of sublated (*bādhita*) embodiment of a *jñānī*. In Brahman there is no true *jagat* (world) perceived to express any view about it. Only the *jñānī* whose knowledge about the true nature of Brahman is clear and whose embodiment continues due to *prārabdha karmas*, can remark about what is the nature of empirical world. For this reason such a *jñānī* is referred as *pāramārthika-jīva* adding the adjective *pāramārthika* - related to the absolute truth or its knowledge - to the earlier status of a *jīva*.

In *jñānī's* vision both the empirical *jagat* (world) and its experiencer *jīva* (individual) are false (*mithyā*) and not real (*satyam*). The following are the reasons why both of them are false:

- i) It is universally experienced that both the empirical *jīva* and *jagat* cease to exist in terms of perception and interaction, in sleep for the individual who is in that state. A real thing (*satyam*) can never cease to be.
- ii) Though the empirical *jīva* and *jagat* are beginningless (*anādi*), their total negation is revealed by the *Upaniṣads*. For example the statement from the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* (3-2-7), "*gatāḥ kalāḥ* - all the facets of this Creation finally disappear in Brahman." points out the total absence of *jīva* and *jagat* in the state of *videha-mukti* (bodiless liberation). Thus the evanescent empirical *jīva* and *jagat* are necessarily false (*mithyā*).

iii) It is true that even after the firm abidance (*niṣṭhā*) in the knowledge of Brahman, in the state of *jīvanmukti* - liberation while living - at times there is the cognition of empirical *jīva* and *jagat*, by a *jñānī*. However the total negation of empirical *jīva* and *jagat* is very clear to a *jñānī*. This is known on the basis of *Upaniṣadic* statements (*śruti*), the reasoning (*yukti*) and one's own direct experience (*anubhava*), i.e. direct cognition (*aparokṣānubhūti*), strictly in conformity with the true nature of Brahman, totally free from the entire superimposed Creation (i.e. *prapañcopaśamam*).

All these facts lead us to the conclusion that the empirical (*vyāvahārika*) *jīva* and *jagat* are as much false as the dream *jīva* and *jagat* are for a waker. The last phrase of this verse, viz. *jñānī* (called *pāramārthikaḥ*) knows them as false, is corroborated in the forthcoming verse.

पारमार्थिकजीवस्तु ब्रह्मैक्यं पारमार्थिकम् ।  
प्रत्येति वीक्षते नान्यद्वीक्षते त्वनृतात्मना ॥४२॥

*pāramārthika-jīvastu brahmaikyaṁ pāramārthikam  
pratyeti vīkṣate nānyad-vīkṣate tvanṛtātmanā - (42)*

पारमार्थिकजीवः - *jñānī* (the knower of Brahman) तु - indeed  
ब्रह्मैक्यं - identity with Brahman पारमार्थिकम् - real (इति - thus) प्रत्येति  
- knows अन्यत् - another न वीक्षते - does not see अनृतात्मना - as  
false in nature तु - certainly वीक्षते - sees. - (42)

42. *Jñānī* (the knower of Brahman) knows indeed his/her identity with Brahman as real. He/she does not see another. (If at all *jñānī* sees, then) certainly sees (the other) as false in nature.

*Paramārthika-jīva*, as described earlier, is a knower of Brahman (*jñānī*) who is nothing but Brahman itself. Such a person's vision until the body wielded by oneself dies, is that the Brahman having the nature of *sat cit ānanda*, free from all the limitations and the notions of bondage or liberation is the true nature of oneself. This fact is *paramārthikam* - real - or itself the ultimate truth.

Due to the cognition of non-dual Brahman and the abidance in it, a *jñānī* does not see anything other than Brahman. The *Upaniṣads* also reveal this fact. The statements like "In *Bhūmā* (i.e. Brahman) nothing else is seen, nothing else is heard, nothing else is known" (*Ch.U.* 7-24-1); "In self-knowledge, for *jñānī*, everything becomes nothing but *ātmā*" (*Br.U.* 4-5-15), can be considered. At times due to strong *prārabdha karma* (already begun results of past action) when *jñānī* interacts with the world, the world (*jagat*) and one's own individuality (*jīvatvam*) are of course perceived. Yet, because of having the direct knowledge of Brahman, *jagat* and *jīvatvam* are cognised as false (*anṛta*) in nature. Both are no more treated as real (*satyam*) as used to be the case earlier in the realm of self-ignorance.

## THE ILLUSTRATION OF WATER, WAVE AND FOAM

The example at an individual level of subjective *jīva* and *jagat*, confirmed that the empirical (*vyāvahārika*) *jīva* and *jagat* are the products of *māyā*, and false in nature. It is well known that the dream *jīva* and *jagat* have no existence apart from *cidābhāsa* (reflection of pure awareness). When both dream *jīva* and *jagat* do not persist, what remains is only *cidābhāsa*, their basis. Even then this fact is explained further by citing a suitable illustration from the external world. With the help of both external (verse 43) and

internal (verses 38 to 40) illustrations, the following two facts are going to be laid down:

- i) The empirical (*vyāvahārika*) *jīva* (individual) and *jagat* (world) have no existence apart from their basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*), viz. *sākṣī* who is identical with Brahman.
- ii) After the existence (*sattā*) of empirical *jīva* and *jagat* is nullified by self-knowledge what remains is only *sākṣī*/Brahman.

To vindicate these two points first, the general rule that a superimposed thing (*adhyasta*) is non-different from its basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) is amplified by an illustration from the external world. The same observation is further applied to the empirical (*vyāvahārika*) and subjective (*prātibhāsika*) *jīva* (individual) and *jagat* (world). The next two verses together form a sentence.

माधुर्यद्रवशैत्यानि नीरधर्मास्तरङ्गके ।

अनुगम्याथ तन्निष्ठे फेनेऽप्यनुगता यथा ॥४३॥

*mādhurya-drava-śaityāni nīradharmāstaraṅgake*  
*anugamyātha tanniṣṭhe phenepyanugatā yathā - (43)*

साक्षिस्थाः सच्चिदानन्दाः सम्बन्धाव्यावहारिके ।

तद्द्वारेणानुगच्छन्ति तथैव प्रातिभासिके ॥४४॥

*sākṣisthāḥ saccidānandāḥ sambandhādvvyāvahārike*  
*taddvāreṇānugacchanti tathaiṣa prātibhāsike - (44)*

यथा - as माधुर्यद्रवशैत्यानि - sweetness, liquidity (liquidness) and coolness नीरधर्माः - the characteristics of water तरङ्गके - in the

wave अनुगम्य - having inhered अथ - thereafter तन्निष्ठे - situated on it फेने - in the foam अपि - also अनुगताः - inhere. - (43)

तथा एव - exactly so साक्षिस्थाः - existing in *sākṣī* (pure awareness) सच्चिदानन्दाः - *sat cit ānanda* सम्बन्धात् - by relation व्यावहारिके - in the empirical (*jīva* and *jagat*) अनुगच्छन्ति - inhere तद्द्वारेण - through it (*vyāvahārika*) प्रातिभासिके - in the subjective (i.e. dream *jīva* and *jagat*) (अनुगच्छन्ति - inhere). - (44)

43-44. As the characteristics of water, viz. sweetness, liquidity and coolness, having inhered in the wave inhere thereafter in the foam also situated on it (the wave); exactly so, *sat cit ānanda* existing in *sākṣī*, by relation, inhere in the empirical *jīva* and *jagat*. (Similarly) through the empirical *jīva* and *jagat* (they, viz. *sat cit ānanda*) inhere in the subjective *jīva* and *jagat*.

The characteristics of water are sweetness, liquidity - liquidness - and coolness. Sweetness here refers to the natural taste of water that provides the base for all the other tastes. It is a biological fact that a dry tongue cannot taste anything unless some moisture at least through saliva is available.

Waves arise from the water surface on account of wind. The wave seen on the water surface is nothing else but the water itself having taken a shape on the surface, thereby given a specific different name other than water. The water does not give up its nature when it is seen as a wave. The sweetness, liquidity and the coolness of water inhere in the wave too. Such a different appearance in the form of a distinct new thing without discarding original nature is called *vivarta* - an apparent form or a new appearance but unreal in nature. The wave is an apparent form

(*vivarta*) of water. It exists in the water.

After the wave is produced, foam can be born over it. The foam situated on the wave is again an apparent new form taken by the wave. The foam exists in the wave. The sweetness, liquidity and coolness of water abiding in the wave, continue to inhere further in the foam also.

In terms of perception the water, wave and foam differ from one another, but all the three have no existence independent of their basic nature of sweetness, liquidity and coolness. In fact, water, wave and foam are essentially their basic nature, having assumed distinct functional forms. All that happens when we say a wave or foam is formed is only this change in external perceptible appearance. The immediately preceding basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) gets covered or ignored in terms of our perception - or more precisely in our understanding. Then it appears as the next apparent (*vivarta*) form. Therefore the subsequent apparent form or the unreal but perceptible appearance is non-different (*ananya*) from its immediately preceding basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*).

In this illustration, the water appears as wave and the wave in turn appears as foam. In the reverse order, the foam is non-different from its basis, the wave, and the wave is non-different (*ananya*) from its basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*), the water. The relation (*sambandha*) between the water and the wave or the wave and foam is of *vivarta* nature - an unreal but perceptible and functional appearance without discarding the original nature. The reason of seeing it as a new or distinctly different entity is either the ignorance of true nature of the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) or not paying attention to the basis. These facts will enable us to ascertain the true nature



of subjective (*prātibhāsika*) and empirical (*vyāvahārika*) *jīva* (individual) and *jagat* (world).

Let us now investigate into the empirical and subjective *jīva* and *jagat* on the guidelines of this illustration. *Sat cit ānanda* - existence, knowledge principle and happiness - is the essential nature of *sākṣī* who is identical with nothing else but Brahman. The relation between *sākṣī* and *vyāvahārika* - the empirical *jīva* and *jagat* - is that of *vivarta* (an unreal appearance). *Sākṣī* is the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) and the others are falsely superimposed (*adhyasta*). This is just like the relation between the water and the wave. Similar is the relation between *vyāvahārika* (empirical *jīva* and *jagat*) and *prātibhāsika* (the subjective/dream *jīva* and *jagat*) as is the case of the wave and foam. *Sat cit ānanda* aspects of *sākṣī* inhere in the empirical (*vyāvahārika*) *jīva* and *jagat* through the relation of *vivarta* (an unreal though perceptible appearance) like the characteristics of water in the wave. The same *sat cit ānanda* aspects abiding in the empirical *jīva* and *jagat* inhere further in the subjective (*prātibhāsika*/dream) *jīva* and *jagat*, as seen in the wave and foam.

The words *vyāvahārikaḥ* and *prātibhāsikaḥ* used in this verse actually refer to empirical and subjective (dream) *jīvas* respectively. But they do include empirical and subjective *jagat* (world) by implication as *jīva* is an essential part of the Creation (*jagat*). There is no *jīva* without *jagat*. The word *sākṣisthaḥ* - existing in *sākṣī* - gives an impression of having a relation of support and the supported or a substance and its attributes between the two. But, it cannot be so between *sākṣī* and *sat cit ānanda* because *sat cit ānanda* itself is *sākṣī*. So the usage *sākṣisthaḥ* having a locative case has to be taken secondarily for want of better expression in the relative world due to limitation of language or words.

Actually the subjective *jīva* and *jagat* (of dream world) are an apparent (*vivarta*) form featuring on empirical *jīva* (*cidābhāsa* endowed with impressions of waking world), and this is well known.

The illustration makes us understand that only *sat cit ānanda* existing in *cidābhāsa* (empirical/*vyāvahārika jīva*) - corresponding to wave - inheres in the subjective *jīva* and *jagat* (of dream world) - corresponding to foam.

Now consider the same in reverse order. The subjective *jīva* and *jagat* (of dream world) are non-different (*ananya*) from their basis *cidābhāsa* (the empirical *jīva*). This is comparable to foam being non-different from the wave. As the wave in turn is non-different from water with the characteristics of water themselves inhering in the wave, the *sat cit ānanda* (corresponding to innate characteristics of water) of *sākṣī* (corresponding to water) inhere in *cidābhāsa* (i.e. empirical *jīva*) and *jagat* (corresponding to wave). This proves the superimposed individual *jīva* (*cidābhāsa*) and *jagat* (world) to be non-different (*ananya*) from their basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*), viz. *sākṣī* who is identical with Brahman.

The following tabulated comparison will further clarify the different parallels between the illustration (*dṛṣṭānta*) and the illustrated (*dārṣṭānta*):

#### THE ILLUSTRATION

#### THE ILLUSTRATED COUNTERPART

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Water.  | 1. <i>Sākṣī</i> (Brahman).  |
| 2. Sweetness, liquidity, coolness<br>(the characteristics of water). | 2. <i>Sat cit ānanda</i><br>(the nature of <i>sākṣī</i> /Brahman).                                |
| 3. The wave is <i>vivarta</i><br>(unreal form) of water.             | 3. Empirical ( <i>vyāvahārika jīva</i> )<br>and <i>jagat</i> are <i>vivarta</i> of <i>sākṣī</i> . |

4. Characteristics of water  
inhere in the wave.

5. Foam is *vivarta* of wave.

6. The characteristics of water  
inherent in the wave, inhere  
further in foam.

7. Foam is non-different  
(*ananya*) from the wave.

8. The wave is non-different  
from its basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*),  
the water.

9. In reality water only exists.  
The wave and foam are  
apparent perceptible  
functional entities and  
therefore false.

4. *Sat cit ānanda*, the nature of  
*sākṣī* inheres in the empirical  
*jīva* and *jagat*.

5. Subjective (*prātibhāsika*/  
dream) *jīva* and *jagat* are  
*vivarta* of *vyāvahārika*  
(empirical *jīva/cidābhāsa*).

6. *Sat cit ānanda* inherent in  
*vyāvahārika* (empirical *jīva*/  
*cidābhāsa*) inheres further in  
*prātibhāsika* (subjective/  
dream *jīva* and *jagat*).

7. Subjective *jīva* and *jagat*  
are non-different from  
empirical *jīva* (*cidābhāsa*).

8. Empirical *jīva* and *jagat* are  
non-different from their  
basis, *sākṣī* (Brahman).

9. In reality *sākṣī* (Brahman)  
only exists for ever.  
*Vyāvahārika* and  
*prātibhāsika* are apparent  
perceptible functionally  
transacting entities and  
therefore false.

Thus the non-different nature (*ananyatvam*) or identity of  
empirical (*vyāvahārika*) *jīva* and *jagat* with *sākṣī* (Brahman) their  
basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) was shown. This truth is reaffirmed in the last  
two verses of the text with the amplification of the same illustration  
by pointing out that the existence of their basis is always present  
even when all the superimposed things cease to exist.

Actually the subjective *jīva* and *jagat* (of dream world) are an apparent (*vivarta*) form featuring on empirical *jīva* (*cidābhāsa* endowed with impressions of waking world), and this is well known. The illustration makes us understand that only *sat cit ānanda* existing in *cidābhāsa* (empirical/*vyāvahārika jīva*) - corresponding to wave - inheres in the subjective *jīva* and *jagat* (of dream world) - corresponding to foam.

Now consider the same in reverse order. The subjective *jīva* and *jagat* (of dream world) are non-different (*ananya*) from their basis *cidābhāsa* (the empirical *jīva*). This is comparable to foam being non-different from the wave. As the wave in turn is non-different from water with the characteristics of water themselves inhering in the wave, the *sat cit ānanda* (corresponding to innate characteristics of water) of *sākṣī* (corresponding to water) inhere in *cidābhāsa* (i.e. empirical *jīva*) and *jagat* (corresponding to wave). This proves the superimposed individual *jīva* (*cidābhāsa*) and *jagat* (world) to be non-different (*ananya*) from their basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*), viz. *sākṣī* who is identical with Brahman.

The following tabulated comparison will further clarify the different parallels between the illustration (*dṛṣṭānta*) and the illustrated (*dārṣṭānta*):

#### THE ILLUSTRATION

1. Water.
2. Sweetness, liquidity, coolness (the characteristics of water).
3. The wave is *vivarta* (unreal form) of water.

#### THE ILLUSTRATED COUNTERPART

1. *Sākṣī* (Brahman).
2. *Sat cit ānanda* (the nature of *sākṣī*/Brahman).
3. Empirical (*vyāvahārika jīva* and *jagat* are *vivarta* of *sākṣī*).

4. Characteristics of water inhere in the wave.
5. Foam is *vivarta* of wave.
6. The characteristics of water inherent in the wave, inhere further in foam.
7. Foam is non-different (*ananya*) from the wave.
8. The wave is non-different from its basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*), the water.
9. In reality water only exists. The wave and foam are apparent perceptible functional entities and therefore false.
4. *Sat cit ānanda*, the nature of *sākṣi* inheres in the empirical *jīva* and *jagat*.
5. Subjective (*prātibhāsika* dream) *jīva* and *jagat* are *vivarta* of *vyāvahārika* (empirical *jīva/cidābhāsa*).
6. *Sat cit ānanda* inherent in *vyāvahārika* (empirical *jīva/cidābhāsa*) inheres further in *prātibhāsika* (subjective/ dream *jīva* and *jagat*).
7. Subjective *jīva* and *jagat* are non-different from empirical *jīva* (*cidābhāsa*).
8. Empirical *jīva* and *jagat* are non-different from their basis, *sākṣi* (Brahman).
9. In reality *sākṣi* (Brahman) only exists for ever. *Vyāvahārika* and *prātibhāsika* are apparent perceptible functionally transacting entities and therefore false.

Thus the non-different nature (*ananyatvam*) or identity of empirical (*vyāvahārika*) *jīva* and *jagat* with *sākṣi* (Brahman) their basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) was shown. This truth is reaffirmed in the last two verses of the text with the amplification of the same illustration by pointing out that the existence of their basis is always present even when all the superimposed things cease to exist.

लये फेनस्य तद्धर्मा द्रवाद्याः स्युस्तरङ्गके ।  
तस्यापि विलये नीरे तिष्ठन्त्येते यथा पुरा ॥४५॥

*laye phenasya taddharmā dravādyāḥ syustaraṅgake  
tasyāpi vilaye nīre tiṣṭhantyeṭe yathā purā - (45)*

फेनस्य लये - when the foam dissolves तद्धर्मा:- its characteristics  
द्रवाद्याः - (such as) liquidity etc. तरङ्गके - in the wave स्युः - abide  
तस्य - its अपि - also विलये - in the disappearance एते - these  
(characteristics) यथा - as पुरा - before नीरे - in the water तिष्ठन्ति -  
abide. - (45)

45. When the foam dissolves, its characteristics (such as) liquidity etc. abide in the wave. When the wave also disappears, these (characteristics) abide in the water as before.

The foam is an unreal form (*vivarta*) to be found in the realm of perception on its basis the wave. When the foam dissolves its characteristics, viz. liquidity, sweetness and coldness abide in its basis the wave. In the same manner, when the apparently perceptible wave also merges in its basis the water, the same characteristics like liquidity abide in the water as they were of water even before the wave and foam were born. Thus the liquidity, sweetness and coldness of water persist all along the three forms which means that the water exists in all three periods - before the birth of wave and foam, during their existence and after they cease to exist. The basis water therefore is always there whereas the superimposed wave and foam are born in between and disappear. They are born of water, exist in water and finally merge back in water. They have no existence separate from water. Therefore in

reality, there is nothing called wave and foam except their unreal but perceptible and functional appearance. What exists throughout is only water.

The fact that even when the superimposed (*adhyasta*) things cease to exist, only the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) finally remains is now shown in respect of *sākṣī*, *jīva* (individual) and *jagat* (world).

प्रातिभासिकजीवस्य लये स्युर्व्यावहारिके ।  
तल्लये सच्चिदानन्दाः पर्यवस्यन्ति साक्षिणि ॥४६॥

*prātibhāsika-jīvasya laye syurvyāvahārike*  
*tallaye saccidānandāḥ paryavasyanti sākṣiṇi - (46)*

प्रातिभासिकजीवस्य लये - when the subjective *jīva* (with dream *jagat*) disappears सच्चिदानन्दाः - *sat cit* and *ānanda* व्यावहारिके - in the empirical *jīva* (*cidābhāsa*) स्युः - abide तल्लये - when it (empirical *jīva*) ceases to exist (सच्चिदानन्दाः - *sat cit* and *ānanda*) साक्षिणि - in *sākṣī* पर्यवस्यन्ति - end in. - (46)

When the subjective *jīva* (with dream *jagat*) disappears, *sat cit* and *ānanda* (in it) abide in the empirical *jīva* (*cidābhāsa*). The same *sat cit* and *ānanda* end in *sākṣī* when it (empirical *jīva*) ceases to exist.

The word *prātibhāsika-jīva* (subjective/dream *jīva*) includes in itself the subjective (dream) *jagat* whereas *vyāvahārika* (empirical) stands for empirical *jīva* or what is called *cidābhāsa* endowed with the impressions of waking world (empirical *jagat*). In case of waking up from dream also, *sat cit ānanda* inherent in the

subjective (dream) *jīva* and *jagat* - dreamer and the dreamt world - merge in the empirical *jīva* (*cidābhāsa*) having the impressions of waking world.

The empirical *jīva* also ceases to exist along with the accompanied *jagat* (the world). The disappearance of *jīva* is its *laya* and it also suggests the dissolution of the world called *pralaya*. *Pralaya* includes *laya* in itself. There are following four kinds of *pralayas*:

- i) *Nitya-pralaya* - daily dissolution - corresponds to our daily sleep when the world is extinct for the individual.
- ii) *Naimittika-pralaya* - dissolution occasioned by some cause - occurs during the sleep or night of *Hiranyagarbha* - called *Brahmā* (not Brahman) in *purāṇas* - who is the presiding deity of macrocosmic subtle bodies (*samaṣṭi-sūkṣma-śarīras*). Its duration is 4320 million human years. By the by one full day comprising day and night of *Brahmā* consists of 8640 million human years.
- iii) *Prākṛta-pralaya* - dissolution in *prakṛti* (i.e. *māyā* or the Creative power) - takes place when the tenure of a given *Brahmā* (*Hiranyagarbha*) gets over. This span is 120 years of *Brahmā* called *Brahma-varṣas* (years). According to Indian chronology - with 360 days in a year - one *Brahma-varṣa* or year of *Brahmā* is equivalent to 3110400 million human years.
- iv) *Ātyantika-pralaya* - total dissolution - is nothing but liberation from all embodiments - *videha-mukti*. In the first three types self-ignorance of *jīva* persists. Therefore the empirical *jīva* and *jagat* revive after the duration of each dissolution is complete



and the Creation manifests. It is only in the last type of dissolution that the *jīva* and *jagat* do not return, having been destroyed once for ever, in the wake of self-knowledge.

In all these dissolutions, *sat cit ānanda* inherent in the empirical *jīva* and *jagat* (world) culminate in *sākṣī* (Brahman). *Sākṣī* or Brahman is the ultimate truth and so, it has no other independent basis. Thus *sākṣī* (Brahman) always exists whereas the empirical *jīva* and *jagat* and their subjective extensions are absent before the Creation and after its dissolution. The basis *sākṣī* (Brahman) is always there in contrast to the superimposed *jīva* and *jagat* that are born periodically in between and disappear. They are born from *sākṣī*, exist in *sākṣī*, and then merge back in *sākṣī*. They have no existence independent of *sākṣī* (Brahman). To sum up, in reality, there is nothing like empirical or subjective *jīva* and *jagat* except their perceptible and functional but truly unreal, (*vivarta*) appearance. What exists is only *sākṣī* (Brahman).

Even *sākṣī* (Brahman) acquires the status of *sākṣī* - the independent direct illuminator (cognitively) of everything - only because there is perceptible but otherwise false empirical *jīva* (individual) and *jagat* (world) superimposed on *sākṣī*. Therefore from empirical view, *sākṣī* (Brahman) appears to acquire the following statuses:

- i) *Māyāśrayatvam* - status of being the location (*āśraya*) of *māyā*.
- ii) *Māyāhaṅkārahbyām avacchinnaṭvam* - status of being limited by *māyā* (the Creative power) and *ahaṅkāra* (erroneous "I" notion/ego).
- iii) *Nāmarūpa-tādātmyena bhogyatvam* - the status of an experienceable or objectifiable or perceivable entity by its identification with name (*nāma*) and form (*rūpa*).

- iv) The status of a *samsāri* endowed with notions of doer (*kartā*) and experiencer (*bhoktā*) by erroneously identifying with *antahkaraṇa* (inner instrument) imbued with *cidābhāsa* (reflection of pure awareness).
- v) *Brahmasākṣāt-kartṛtvam* - the status of knowing Brahman directly through the inquiry (*śravaṇa*) as guided by the *Upaniṣads*.
- vi) *Jīvanmuktatvam* - the status of being liberated while living.
- vii) *Videha-muktatvam* - the status of liberation from all types of embodiments subsequently.

From the standpoint of ultimate reality, *sākṣī*/Brahman in its own true nature has none of the above statuses. Its true nature is uncompromisingly described in the following *Upaniṣadic mantra*:

न निरोद्धो न चोत्पत्तिर्न बद्धो न च साधकः ।  
न मुमुक्षुर्न वै मुक्तः इत्येषा परमार्थता ॥

"There is no dissolution, no birth, none in bondage, none aspiring for self-knowledge, no seeker of liberation and none liberated. This is the nature of absolute truth."

This *mantra* appears in four *Upaniṣads*, viz. *Tripuratāpinīyupaniṣad* (5-10), *Avadhūtopaniṣad* (8 or 11), *Brahmabindūpaniṣad* or also called *Amṛtabindūpaniṣad* (10), and *Ātmopaniṣad* - 31. Besides Gauḍapādācārya has also quoted it in *Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣad-kārikā* (2-32).

The veracity of this *Upaniṣadic* declaration can be clear to those who have attained the acme (*niṣṭhā*) of *Brahmajñāna* - the knowledge of Brahman, the ultimate truth. Until then the pursuit of reaching this goal by the empirical (*vyāvahārika*) *jīva* through the

empirical means in the empirical world - though all are apparently functional even though false - are certainly relevant. It is like the utility of fright in dream, born of chasing by a dream tiger in waking up the dreamer from sleep to the reality of waking state to overcome the problem of the dreamt world.

The analysis and the discussion conducted so far in the last fifteen verses with added clarity through illustrations, clarify the false or apparent nature i.e. experiencable but not real, of the superimposed individual (*jīva*) and the world (*jagat*) in contrast to their unchangeable basis Brahman. That they have no existence apart from Brahman is emphasized and when both of them cease to exist, what always remains is Brahman and only Brahman is established very deftly.

## SUMMING-UP

The ultimate - final - and only self-cognitive (*dṛk*) principle (*cit/caitanya*/pure awareness) is the true "I" and that is the basis of the entire Creation. *Dṛk* is ever-existent and is an independent knowledge or cognitive principle. That itself is limitless happiness and is free from mortality. Gaining the direct knowledge of this ultimate basis of everything including the self, is the prime goal of every individual in life. Therein lies the freedom from painful *saṃsāra* and the accomplishment of the only final goal of human life whether we know it and accept it or not. The text hence starts with the direct exercise of discrimination called *dṛk-dṛśya-viveka* making the perceptual field as its locus of inquiry.

"The true "I" (*ātmā*) is always the cognitive principle; it never becomes non-cognitive (*jaḍa/inert*)", is the norm accepted to ascertain the true "I". This is deduced by taking into consideration our own experience universally verifiable that I am never inert in all the three daily states of consciousness. Anything that to begin with poses as cognitive but turns out later on closer scrutiny to be non-cognitive (*dṛśya/inert*), cannot be the true "I". Our five sense organs (eye, ear, tongue, senses of smell and touch) and inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa* comprising mind, intellect, ego and the faculty of memory) do on first impression appear to be sentient (*sacetana*) and cognitive in their behaviour. But in reality, they are inert things, non-cognitive (*dṛśyas*) in nature. They become the *dṛśyas* (the cognised things) of *sākṣī* - the self-existent and self-luminous final cognitive (*dṛk*) or knowledge principle. *Sākṣī* is the same as pure awareness (*cit/caitanya*). It is the true "I" known as *ātmā*. Literally

*sākṣī* means that which independently illumines - makes known - all that is falsely superimposed - attributed - on it due to ignorance of the individual.

*Sākṣī* (pure awareness) is the ultimate cognitive principle (*dṛk*). If it were not so, *sākṣī* will need another cognitive principle to be able to cognise. The next cognitive principle will be therefore called *sākṣī*. That also will need still another cognitive principle being incapable of cognising on its own. Such a trend will lead to regress ad infinitum without any finality.

That a cognitive principle is changeless with respect to its cognised things is the rule. *Sākṣī* (pure awareness)/the true "I" does not change. All that is cognised (*dṛśya*) changes. A change can be known by only a changeless principle. If changes in the cognised things (*dṛśyas*) affect and change *sākṣī*, it cannot know anything. This fact is also substantiated by the Vedas.

*Sākṣī* - also called *citi* (pure awareness) - is neither born nor destroyed. It does not grow or decline. In short it is free from all the possible six changes (*ṣaḍ-vikāras*). It is the spontaneous self-evident knowledge (cognitive) principle and illumines - makes known - all other things in its presence without necessity of any other means.

The changeless *sākṣī* is totally unaffected by the defects and limitations of things (*dṛśyas*) that it illumines. All our thoughts - the modifications of *antaḥkaraṇa* - are invariably inert in nature. They are varied in names and forms and produce diverse experiences. The sum total of these experiences constitutes the *saṃsāra* of a given person. Like objects placed in the darkness which cannot be seen without throwing light on them, these thoughts cannot be

cognised without *sākṣī* - the final cognitive principle - making them known. Because *sākṣī*, the true "I" illumines all the thoughts enabling their experiences, *sākṣī* itself is totally free from all the thoughts and the impact of their experiences. In other words, true "I" (*ātmā*) is free from *samsāra*.

The distinction between *sākṣī* - ultimate cognitive principle (*dṛk*) - and the cognised world including one's embodiments along with thoughts can be clear from the following facts:

- i) The ultimate *dṛk* (*sākṣī*) is independent of all *dṛśyas* (cognised things) whereas *dṛśya* depends on *dṛk* for its existence and function.
- ii) *Dṛk* (*sākṣī*) is one as against *dṛśyas* being varied and innumerable.
- iii) *Dṛk* (*sākṣī*) is sentient in nature, but *dṛśyas* are innately inert.
- iv) *Dṛk* (*sākṣī*) exists for ever. It is *satyam*. *Dṛśyas* are transient. They are false in reality though apparent for a while.
- v) *Dṛśya* is not a part of *dṛk* (*sākṣī*). *Dṛk* (*sākṣī*) is free from and unaffected by *dṛśya*.
- vi) The status of self-evident cognitive principle ascribed to *sākṣī* or *dṛk* is relative on account of *dṛśyas* (also called *sākṣya*). When *dṛśyas* cease to exist, there is no such status of *dṛk* or *sākṣī*. What remains is only the self-evident *citi/caitanya* (pure awareness) - knowledge principle.

The true "I" (*sākṣī/dṛk*) can never have *samsāra* in reality. Yet it is so experienced due to *cicchāya* (चिच्छाया) or *cidābhāsa*

(the reflected pure awareness) in *antaḥkaraṇa* (inner instrument) and the erroneous notion imposed by ignorance. There is a union of reflected pure awareness with *ahaṅkāra* (ego) or for that matter with *antaḥkaraṇa* like fire with iron ball when red hot. This makes *antaḥkaraṇa* appear sentient. Further the physical body acquires the sentiency due to its union with ego (*ahaṅkāra*). The physical body becomes volitionally non-operative during sleep as *ahaṅkāra* withdraws its operation in that state. The *ahaṅkāra* manifests itself partly in the dream state whereas during the waking state it manifests fully.

The second aspect of *antaḥkaraṇa* - other than *ahaṅkāra* - known as mind or *antaḥkaraṇa* itself in the text, is also highly active. It comprises thoughts and is united with *cidābhāsa* (the reflected pure awareness) like *ahaṅkāra*. It produces the mental images in dream. During the waking state, with the functioning sense organs, it creates *vṛttis* (thoughts) corresponding to the sense objects of the external world.

For practical understanding the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) is mainly responsible for *saṃsāra*, even though self-ignorance is at the root of it. It is *antaḥkaraṇa* who provides a scope for *cidābhāsa* (reflected pure awareness) to come into being. The *cidābhāsa* having nexus with self-ignorance and its effects brings about mutual - reciprocal - superimposition between the true "I" and the embodiment i.e. embodiment has as if the attributes of *cit* (true "I"), and the true "I" those of embodiment. This is how the true "I" features as a *saṃsārī*. The inert *antaḥkaraṇa* is the same as the subtle body (*liṅga-śarīra*). It is responsible for the daily cyclic three states of consciousness and for birth and death of an individual.

The inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) also called the subtle body

is the product of *māyā* - the Creative power which is dependent on Brahman. It is endowed with projecting (i.e. creating) and veiling powers. The projecting power (*vikṣepa-śakti*) of *māyā* creates the entire Creation including the subtle body. The manifestation of all the names and forms in Brahman is called the Creation. The Creation is actually false in nature but available for perception and interaction. The veiling power (*āvaraṇa-śakti*) of *māyā* covers the mutual distinction of *dṛk* (the cognitive principle) and *dṛśya* (the cognised things) within the body at an individual level and that present between Brahman and the Creation (*sarga*) in the external world. In fact this veiling power is the prime cause of *saṃsāra*.

The how of the subtle body becoming *saṃsārī* referred to as empirical individual (*vyāvahārika-jīva*) in *Vedāntic* parlance can be understood in a better way after knowing the modi operandi of the two powers that constitute *māyā*. The subtle body that always exists in the presence of all pervasive *sākṣī* has its unity with *cidābhāsa*. Such a subtle body when identified with a physical body becomes *saṃsārī jīva*. The status of *jīva* really cannot be attributed to the true "I" (*sākṣī*). But it is experienced as if in the true "I" (*ātmā*) due to the superimposition of embodiments effected by the veiling power (*āvaraṇa-śakti*) of *māyā*. This wrong notion about true "I" being a *saṃsārī* is totally dispelled when the veiling power of *māyā* is nullified - when the true "I" (*ātmā*) is clearly known. The same veiling power also covers the distinction between Brahman and the Creation (*sarga*). As a result Brahman appears as constantly changing in nature or having the world as its intrinsic feature. In reality, modifications (*vikāras*) can never belong to Brahman. On the destruction of veiling power, the distinction between Brahman and the false Creation stands out. This allows the knowledge of true "I" (*ātmā*) identical with Brahman called *ātmā-jñāna* or *Brahma-jñāna* to be gained by an individual.



The problem of *saṃsāra* can be totally eliminated as seen above by knowing the true nature of Brahman. The text provides one of the direct and yet simple modes of inquiry employed by Vedānta. The method adopted carries a pointed suggestion very useful for contemplation (*nididhyāsana*). It consists of ascertaining Brahman the only reality as distinct from the Creation which is false in nature. It is called *Brahma-sarga-viveka*.

The locus of this inquiry is any of our dealings (*vyavahāra*) with the world. A given thing is so because it exists (*asti*). This is the existence (*sat*) aspect present invariably in everything. The thing shines cognizably (*bhāti*) or is said to be known. Such a knowledge of the thing is possible provided the knowledge principle *cit* (pure awareness/*sākṣī*) is present. The presence of *cit* is itself that *ānanda* (happiness) called *priyam*, because *cit* (*sākṣī*) is truly so. This holds good even if the actual experience is that of sorrow, as the sorrow is known only on account of *cit* having the nature of *ānanda*. Sorrows belong to the modifications of *antaḥkaraṇa* occasioned by unfavourable things. The existence (*sat*) aspect is directly cognised in everything. The knowledge (*cit*) aspect needs for its cognition, the presence of *antaḥkaraṇa* whereas the happiness can be manifest only in a favourable disposition. What is pointed out in the present inquiry is the invariable presence of *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* as the constituents of every worldly dealing (*vyavahāra*) of ours. The thing considered has a name (*nāma*) and a specific form (*rūpa*). The form (*rūpa*) referred to here means the nature of a thing as distinct from all the rest of the things present defining the thing and not a mere visual form.

Out of these five facets, viz. *sat/asti* (existence), *cit/bhāti* (the knowledge principle), *ānanda/priyam* (happiness), *nāma* (name) and *rūpa* (form), the first three facets represent the exact nature of

Brahman. The remaining pair comprising name and form constitute *jagat* - the world. *Sat cit* and *ānanda* are the same in all the objects, beings and events existing in the Creation. However names and forms do differ with each of them. By focussing our attention on *sat cit ānanda* aspects instead of names and forms, in any dealing, we can cognise Brahman in and through the perceived world. This inquiry also unfolds the true "I" as *sat cit ānanda* at the individual level. Thus the true "I" (*ātmā*) and Brahman are identical. The clear knowledge of Brahman exposes the false nature of world consisting of names and forms.

The knowledge of a given thing reveals the thing then and there itself, by dispelling its ignorance. This is equally true for self-knowledge, provided the means that produce and mature self-knowledge are cultivated fully and are free from the obstructions which either hinder the process of knowledge to be born or do not allow to get it matured even after it has taken place. Laxity in the adoption of these means or the presence of obstructions deny the persistent appreciation of true "I" (*ātmā*) in spite of knowledge. This is essentially due to the persistence of previous habits of identifying "I" with one's own embodiment. This can also be due to some inadequacy in the preparation of mind such as the deficiency in the intensity of dispassion (*vairāgya*). The solution provided to overcome this handicap is to undertake contemplation (*nididhyāsana*). It steadies this knowledge enabling its persistent appreciation.

The consistent and constant contemplation (*nididhyāsana*) for a sufficiently long period of time culminates into *samādhi*. A totally absorbed state of *antaḥkaraṇa* (inner instrument) in the knowledge of Brahman to the exclusion of all the falsely superimposed *dṛśyas* - the known - is called *samādhi* in Vedānta. It is neither the dream

state nor the sleep. Unlike in the waking, there is no awareness of any objects, events and beings of the *jagat* including one's body.

Consider the world as perceived through its five facets of *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda*, name and form present therein. To begin with, withdraw the attention from the falsely superimposed names (*nāma*) and forms (*rūpa*), called the world. After having thus disregarded the names and forms focus instead the attention on *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda*. What remains now in one's vision is only Brahman if the locus of contemplation is the external world, or only *ātmā* (the true "I") if it is internal. Brahman or *ātmā*, both being the same, their identity also has to be kept actively in mind during contemplation. By repeated practice, the mind gets absorbed in *ātmā*/Brahman. Such a state is *samādhi*.

To counteract the habitual errors at two different levels two loci are recommended for the practice of *samādhi*. One is *hṛdaya* (heart) also called as *antaḥkaraṇa*, the centre of thoughts, feelings and emotions. Contemplation with this locus helps to nullify the hard formed habits of identification with the gross and subtle bodies along with their ramifications like sorrows. The second locus for practising *samādhi* is the external world to dispel the wrong notion of accepting the dualistic world as real. The two kinds of *samādhi* are *savikalpa* and *nirvikalpa* based on the presence or the absence of the recognition of distinctions (*vikalpa*). The distinction is *tripuṭī* - the triple form - such as the knower, knowledge and the known; or the contemplator, contemplation and the contemplated. Actual practice required is for *savikalpa-samādhi*. The momentum generated by its intense practice leads to *nirvikalpa-samādhi*.

*Savikalpa-samādhis* with respect to both the loci have two sub-divisions, based on the means employed, viz. *dṛśya* (cognised

thing) and *śabda* (scriptural word). In the initial stages of practice, these two remain present and are cognised even when the mind is absorbed in *ātmā*/Brahman. In such cases the *samādhi* is *anuviddha* meaning "mixed with" or "associated with" or "connected to" by *dṛśya* or *śabda* as the case may be.

Accordingly we get the following three types of *samādhi* having heart as its locus for practice. These are also called *samādhis* with internal locus:

i) *Dṛśyānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhi* (internal):

The contemplator has to contemplate on pure awareness (*caitanya*) as the direct illuminator of the cognised internal things (*dṛśya*) like desire etc. This is the state of absorption of the mind (*samādhi*) with *vikalpa* - the recognition of distinctions like contemplator - and is related to - *dṛśya* - the internal cognised things. The cognition of *dṛśya* is still present though the mind is otherwise absorbed in *ātmā* (the true "I").

ii) *Śabdānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhi* (internal):

The words or the phrases from the *Upaniṣads* that reveal the nature of true "I" are employed in this type of practice. The mind here gets absorbed in *ātmā*/the true "I" with the recognition of triple forms (*tripuṭī*). It is also mixed with the scriptural words employed, though other *dṛśyas* are absent.

iii) *Nirvikalpa-samādhi* (internal):

As a result of consistent practice for a sufficiently long period, the earlier two *samādhis* fructify in *nirvikalpa-samādhi*

(internal). *Dṛśyas* and *śabdās* used in earlier two types of practice along with recognised distinctions, are totally discarded in this state. There is complete absorption of the mind in the *ātmā* (the true "I") that is both knowledge principle and itself happiness. The absorbed mind in the *nirvikalpa* state is like a lamp placed in a calm place.

Adopting the method of *Brahma-sarga-viveka*, there are similar three types of *samādhi* with the external locus. They are as follows:

iv) *Dṛśyānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhi* (external):

Taking recourse to any external thing (*dṛśya*), its name and form are disregarded to appreciate Brahman (*sat cit ānanda*) leading to the absorption of mind in Brahman. However the external *dṛśya* utilized for the purpose remains present with *vikalpa* (recognised distinctions).

v) *Śabdānuviddha-savikalpa-samādhi* (external):

The words or statements of the *Upaniṣads* revealing the true nature of Brahman are used to appreciate Brahman. Mind gets absorbed in Brahman, but the presence of words utilized and *vikalpa* remain. However, the other *dṛśyas* are absent.

vi) *Nirvikalpa -samādhi* (external):

The intense practice of two *samādhis* having external locus culminates in this type of *samādhi*. Herein, the mind is totally absorbed in Brahman. There are no *dṛśyas*, words or *vikalpas*

in it. Except for the difference in locus which leads to this type of *samādhi* it is similar to *nirvikalpa samādhi* achieved through internal locus.

The appreciation of one's identity with Brahman is necessary in all the six varieties of *samādhi*. The contemplator has to spend the time constantly in the practice of these six types of *samādhi*. The clear knowledge of Brahman accompanied by the total elimination of identification between the true "I" with the body enables *mumukṣu* - the spiritual seeker - to get the mind absorbed in Brahman at all places and time. The Brahman that is both the cause of and the manifest Creation is thus when clearly known, the knower's desires are extinguished, all doubts are dispelled and the results of actions get terminated.

The last portion of the text comprising fifteen verses is devoted to the ascertainment that *jīva* and *jagat* are false (*mithyā*). This aspect was suggested earlier in the text, but the same is enlarged clearly at the end with adequate reasoning and suitable illustrations. In the course of analysis the following aspects are highlighted:

- a) *Jīva* and *jagat* are false (*mithyā*) because they are so superimposed on their basis Brahman.
- b) They have no existence apart from their basis Brahman.
- c) On gaining the knowledge of Brahman by an individual, both *jīva* and *jagat* disappear in their basis and what remains is the appreciation of only Brahman which is the ultimate truth.

The illustration of subjective (dream/*prātibhāsika*) *jīva* and

*jagat* at internal level confirms the false nature of empirical (*vyāvahārika*) *jīva* and *jagat*. It also shows that empirical *jīva* and *jagat* are non-different (*ananya*) from their basis *sākṣī* (Brahman). This is further corroborated by employing the illustration of water, wave and foam from the external world. Finally what remains is only the basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*) when all the superimposed things cease to exist as reality, is clearly demonstrated in this illustration. In reality nothing other than Brahman exists. The false *jīva* and *jagat* are born and disappear. But what always exists is unchangeable Brahman.

The working of the human mind is like playing musical chair. Only one feature can occupy the mind at a given time. When the mind is preoccupied with the names and forms comprising the *jagat* (world) it cannot direct itself to the investigation of their basis Brahman. An impartial assessment of the world in right perspective and withdrawal from the world are indispensable prerequisites to make the mind available to inquire into the nature of Brahman and abide in it. For those who lack discrimination (*viveka*), the fascination of sense pleasures is so great that it does not permit their mind even to have an inkling of the worth of the highest pursuit in life, leave alone gaining *Brahmajñāna* (self-knowledge). Knowing well the rarity and the lofty uniqueness of human life, such an inadvertence has to be carefully avoided. Unlike the remaining species of the biological world, the human embodiment is gifted with the potential to know this ultimate truth and not merely designed for sense enjoyments. To let this opportunity slip away is surely the sign of immaturity on one's part and sheer waste of precious human life. To inquire and to know the true "I", including the ultimate truth that underlies the entire Creation, is the highest duty that every human has towards oneself. Vedānta which is neither a religion nor a sect shows the direct path to this goal.

The teaching of *Dṛk-dṛśya-viveka* is the highest secret (*rahasya*) handed over in the *Sarasvatī-Rahasyopaniṣad* by Goddess Sarasvatī herself to sage Āśvalāyana, who in turn taught it to other sages. Śrī Bhāratīrtha, the author of the text is more of a commentator, as the main content herein is not his original contribution. Having known the authentic source of this teaching well, let us not cavil at it or pitch our puny intellect against it having all-knowing hubris. Let us receive it reverentially to accomplish the highest goal of human life.



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“.....Human tendency is to take many things for granted. Even the neuroscientists are unable to explain how exactly knowledge or experience “happens”, in spite of their spectacular zeroing in on the physical aspect of the thought by powerful technologies such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and positron-emission tomography (PET). One thing is certain: the scientists will never be able to explain it unless they change their method of approach by proper supplements wherever the science cannot probe any further. Some of them, no doubt are groping in the western philosophies to find a solution; but it is only Vedānta which can solve this riddle, nay, which has already done so with its mathematical approach as it were - to which this text stands as a testimony - into a field where there is even no access to words and the mind. But equally a precise approach - and not a haphazard meddling of a hasty critic - as guided by Vedānta is indispensable to discover the truth that it reveals.”

“..... The general tendency of almost all the spiritual seekers is to run away from thoughts, as they are unable to face them. Here is an instruction to face the devil as it were if the tyrannical thoughts can be considered as devils. The thoughts themselves can be used as the means to appreciate true “I”/sāksī and get the mind absorbed in it.”

Other commentaries by the author:

- 1) Haṃsa-gītā (A treatise on self-knowledge from Bhāgavata)
- 2) Vedānta Pañcadaśī Chapter I - Tattva-viveka (Discovery of your innate greatness)
- 3) You are Absolute Happiness - Brahmānande Yogānandaḥ Vedānta Pañcadaśī Chapter XI
- 4) “Svanī Oḷakha” (Gujarati translation of Vedānta Pañcadaśī, Ch.I, Tattva-viveka - Discovery of your innate greatness)



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